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ABSTRACT

This case study examines the relationships of three organizations participating in the Northwest Wisconsin School-To-Work Consortium, and analyzes the consortium's development over the past 4 years. Signed into law in May 1994, the federal School-To-Work Opportunities Act marked the beginning of a new educational movement to better prepare American secondary students for postsecondary education and the workplace. The Act requires that consortiums of secondary and postsecondary schools, employment and training agencies, and business and labor institutions be established for the purpose of better preparing students for the transition from school to work. In particular, this study looks at how funding affected the inter-organizational relationship of the Consortium. Following Chapter 1 (the introduction), Chapter 2 reviews the current literature available on school-to-work and provides a brief history of efforts made in Northwest Wisconsin. Chapter 3 is the case study that defines the components of the Northwest Wisconsin School-To-Work Consortium. Each of the organizational partners is described, and the four-year history of the consortium dynamic is analyzed. Chapter 4 provides an analysis of the conditions required to create and maintain the consortium, including impact funding, and formal and internal structure. Finally, the need for further research into school-to-work issues is discussed. (Contains 10 references.) (AS)

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THE SCHOOL-TO-WORK CONSORTIUM: AN ANALYSIS OF INTERORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

by

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FORWARD

The purpose of this case study research is to examine the relationships of three organizations participating in the Northwest Wisconsin School-To-Work Consortium and analyze the Consortium's development over the past four years (1). In particular, I wish to look at how funding affected the inter-organizational relationships of the Consortium. This is a critical issue to research as I am unaware of any previous researchers who have tackled the issue of how funding affects a School-To-Work project. Although the National Institute for Work and Learning studied 14 School-To-Work sites and found that creative financing was one of ten key elements "critical to the success of a school-to-work transition system"(2), I have not found any research which looks at how School-To-Work system funding has changed over time nor the effect funding constraints has had upon the relationships of Consortium members.

As I have been performing the research and literature review for this case study, it has become abundantly clear that the amount of research related to school-to-work has greatly increased over the course of the past two years. However, the bulk of available research only examines a particular program component of a School-To-Work system such as Job Shadowing, Career Counseling or Youth Apprenticeships. Most of the existing research is geared towards School-To-Work practitioners who are looking at how to establish

specific School-To-Work program components. Another large portion of the existing research is centered around equity issues of School-To-Work such as ensuring that minority groups have equal access to School-To-Work programs and how to develop School-To-Work program components for the disabled. I believe this research project is significant because there are few research projects which take a more global or systemic view of a School-To-Work system, and none which identify the pressures placed upon a system due to funding cuts. This research is important because it will significantly add to the growing body of knowledge concerning School-To-Work programming and help to fill a huge gap in the current literature. This research is important because it will also provide information to School-To-Work policy makers and administrators to help them understand how to pull together a variety of diverse funding streams while recognizing the importance funding has on the services offered. My hope is that other administrators and board members can learn from our successes, failures and present challenges. As federal funding from the national School-To-Work office begins to end, this research could possibly help other School-To-Work consortiums in similar financial situations.

In a broader sense, I think this research is important to the taxpayers as a significant amount of economic and political investment has been expended to improve our nation's ability to transition young people from secondary to post secondary school and/or the world of work. Research which investigates and catalogs the use of these funds at an administrative level should be as valuable as research at the practitioner level. There have been several similar education reform initiatives which have failed such as 2+2 and Education for Employment. Some in the education community believe that the School-

To-Work initiative is destined to similar failure. If this is true, it will be important to accurately document why this initiative has failed. If School-To-Work succeeds, it will be important to document why this initiative succeeded, where other initiatives failed. Also, on a broader sense, there seems to be a strong national perception that money will not solve our social/educational problems. While this maybe a backlash of the Great Society efforts, this conservative monetary practice is none-the-less driving how public policy is developed. The federal School-To-Work Act is a product of this thinking. It is important to note that the conceptualization, development and implementation of the School-To-Work Act was a strong bipartisan effort of both the Bush and Clinton administrations. However, the federal School-To-Work Act does not provide for long-term funding. Therefore, it is important to document the success or failure of School-To-Work systems as related to funding because it will provide data which could serve to prove, or disprove, this current restrictive monetary policy towards social/education programs.

As the Executive Director of the Northwest Wisconsin Concentrated Employment Program, I have played a critical role in the development of the Northwest Wisconsin School-To-Work Consortium. I have been deeply involved with At-Risk youth programming, an active member of the Tech Prep Guidance and Special Needs Committee, a member of the Transition Leadership Cadre, and a member of the 3C's Steering Committee. My educational and professional work are intertwined with School-To-Work issues as several of the credits I have taken as part of my Master's Degree were part of the Transition Leadership Cadre training. I have invested hundreds of thousands of dollars of NWCEP's resources, many hours of NWCEP's staff time, NWCEP/NWPIC

Board member's time, and a multitude of professional and personal hours of my time towards this project. While at first blush it may seem that I have an inherent bias and may be unable to objectively research this project, it needs to be noted that this case study is a historical research project. Researchers are most often an integral part of the research process utilizing this type of format (3). I am a participant observer in the truest sense of the word (4) and this role gives me a unique perspective of the project in that I have an intimate understanding of our School-To-Work system that only a few others in our Consortium share. I also bring to the project my personal notes and observations. The process of developing this paper has been an interesting and sometimes painful process of self-discovery. It has been extremely rewarding to look back and see all of the wonderful things that I have had a role in implementing. It is also very painful to consider that all which has been built, may be torn asunder. I wish to thank Professor Stephen Hintz for his work at restructuring my research which placed it into a more professionally academic and readable format. I wish to also thank Dianne Lazear for her work with developing the initial content and structure of the research. Your counsel and help has been greatly appreciated. Thank you!

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

School-To-Work Transition For Students and Organizational Mechanisms For Implementation

On May 4, 1994, President Clinton signed into law the Federal School-To-Work Opportunities Act which marked the beginning of a new educational movement to better prepare American secondary students for post secondary education and the world of work. The Act requires that consortiums of secondary schools, post secondary schools, employment and training agencies, business and labor be established for the purposes of better preparing and students for the transition from school to the world of work. The Act recognizes that to reach the above goal, the burden of improvement must be shared by a variety of educational institutions, community based organizations and area businesses. In addition, the Act requires that consortiums deliver school-based and work-based educational opportunities along with connecting activities. The definitions for these three categories of services are quite ambiguous. In a nut-shell, school-based activities are educational components that take place within a traditional school/classroom setting; work-based activities are educational components which take place at a traditional work-site; and connecting activities are components which link school-based and work-based

activities. Consequently, consortiums of the above listed groups are required to administer School-To-Work funds in local areas.

At its best, the federal School-To-Work initiative is unique in that it seeks to establish systemic reform rather than "adding-on" an additional School-To-Work component(s). School-To-Work attempts to inject comprehensive transitioning values and mechanisms into the current educational/vocational systems by which students are moved from school to the world of work. At its best, School-To-Work should seek to develop a method by which career/educational transition services can be incorporated into every classroom, work-site, and counseling session. To accomplish such a broad-based goal, School-To-Work consortia must establish networks of inter-organizational groups that work on developing school-based, work-based and connecting activities at various levels. This is no easy task because School-To-Work is a complex system and developing an understanding of the goals from top level administrators to front-line teachers and job developers is critical to the success of the initiative. Communication lines between agencies must be wide open and mutual trust is a base-line requirement.

The Northwest Wisconsin School-To-Work Consortium was formed in the late summer of 1994 under a federal implementation grant. The Northwest Wisconsin Private Industry Council (NWPIC), in conjunction with its partner Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) service provider, the Northwest Wisconsin Concentrated Employment Program (NWCEP), approached the local technical college (Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College - WITC), and the local education service provider (Cooperative Education

Services Agency #12 - CESA#12), with a proposal to form the Northwest Wisconsin School-To-Work Consortium. It was the task of the Consortium to implement a systemic School-To-Work system in northwest Wisconsin expanding upon a foundation of existing JTPA, Tech Prep and At Risk programming already being provided by the above agencies. It was agreed that the partners would focus on establishing a system which would guide individual school districts in implementing the changes called for in the School-To-Work Opportunities Act. On August 1, 1994, the NWPIC was notified that it was one of only fifteen grantees to receive a federal School-To-Work local implementation grant. This grant began on October 1, 1994, with a $797,931 federal grant and approximately $700,000 of local matching funds. The NWPIC and NWCEP's School-To-Work system was developed and implemented within twenty-four (24) school districts in Northwestern Wisconsin.

Properly preparing students for the world of work is an initiative which cuts across any single organization thereby creating the need for consortial arrangements. These School-To-Work Consortia provide the participating agencies with an opportunity to expand their missions and services. School-To-Work Consortium arrangements provides a vehicle which allows schools, agencies and businesses to influence a greater population than they are able to reach through their singular environments. The development of these Consortia, however, also creates the need to develop and sustain fragile relationships across organizational boundaries. Different School-To-Work Consortia will, of course, have differing levels of inter-agency cooperation and varying levels of collaborative efforts. The relationships upon which these Consortia are built vary greatly and

consequently have an impact upon the level of services, the inter-organizational collaboration and ultimately, the success or failure of the Consortium to attain its goals.

The Topic: The Inter-organizational Dynamics Of A School-To-Work Program: A Case Study

The topic of this paper is the inter-organizational dynamics within a School-To-Work Consortium in Northwest Wisconsin. Three agencies created the nucleus of the Northwest Wisconsin School-To-Work Consortium. They held the primary responsibility for the conceptualization, development, and implementation of Northwest Wisconsin's School-To-Work system. This particular study looks at the evolving relationship among these three organizations and explains what has transpired.

The Northwest Wisconsin School-To-Work Consortium received federal funding in year one (October 1, 1994 through January 20, 1996) in the amount of $797,931. The reason for this lengthy grant period was that it took some time for the Consortium to hire all of the necessary staff and an extension was granted to expend the funds which were unspent at the beginning of the grant period.

Method: Case Study

The method of research will be a case study which examines the development of the inter-organizational relationships between three agencies that developed the Northwest Wisconsin School-To-Work Consortium. I will look at the history of the Consortium in terms of four stages along a continuum. The first stage is the origins of the consortium, the period from 1982 to 1994; the second stage is the immediate post receipt of the grant, the period from May 4, 1994 to December 31, 1994; the third stage is the implementation

period when the Consortium was federally funded, from January 1, 1995, to January 20, 1996; and the fourth and final stage is the post implementation period when the Consortium received substantial funding cuts, from January 21, 1996 to present. Along this continuum with four stages I will analyze the inter-organizational relationships as they relate to the incentives to participate in the Consortium, the levels of participation within the Consortium, the rules of participation within the Consortium, and the missions of the individual agencies and the Consortium as a whole.

Outline of Paper

The following chapter will review the current literature available on School-To-Work as it relates to the need for better transition programs nationally, and the literature as it relates to organizational coalitions. I will also provide a brief history of School-To-Work efforts in Northwest Wisconsin in an attempt to "set the stage", thereby providing the reader with a contextual framework in which to perform the case study.

Chapter three is the case study which will define the components of the Northwest Wisconsin School-To-Work Consortium. In particular, I will explain each of the organizational partners, the level of each agency's participation, contributions and expectations, and then analyze what happened to the relationships within the Consortium over its four year history.

Chapter four will provide an analysis of the relationships within the Consortium, looking particularly at the conditions required to create and maintain the Consortium. I will examine the impact funding has had upon the inter-organizational relationships between the three Consortium partners. I will also analyze other variables such as the

formal Consortium's structure and each agency's internal structure which have had an impact upon the inter-organizational relationships. Finally, I will discuss the need for further research into School-To-Work issues.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Brief Explanation of School-To-Work Issues: Need For Programs

America needs to better prepare high school students to enter the world of work (5). School-To-Work programs have been implemented to help fulfill this need. It is critical to understand that the American and world-wide labor markets have, and continue to, change rapidly over the past twenty years. After World War II, America was the single greatest industrialized nation. America's mass-production capabilities, driven by abundant natural resources and economies of scale, allowed us to out-produce all other industrialized nations.(6) The American workplace was based on a hierarchial assembly-line model of production which required a few educated managers and many passive workers needing only rudimentary literacy and numeric skills. The American educational system helped to produce workers who fit this Tayloristic, mass-production model. A small percentage of students went on to a university education and became the managers, while the remainder could obtain family supporting manufacturing employment with or without a high school education. This model of production and education has been the American standard throughout most of this century. However, as other manufacturing-based industrialized nations grew, increased competition for market share has become the norm.

America is no longer the preeminent industrialized nation; rather we are one of several nations competing for scarce market share. Also during the past twenty years, the proliferation of technology has made the availability of natural resources and economies of scale of less strategic importance to the manufacturing process.(7)

It is possible, and common today, for a part to be designed in Germany, to have a drawing of the part faxed to India for programming into a computer, have the computer program downloaded via telephone to a CNC machining center in Singapore for manufacture and have the part shipped to the USA for assembly. The proliferation of technology has also increased the economic competition between nations.

In this highly competitive world marketplace, American industry will no longer provide high-wage, low skill manufacturing jobs. Due to world competition, low skill manufacturing jobs are easily moved to nations which provide the lowest of wages. The new competitive environment has also produced a glut of international corporations which have production facilities strategically located throughout the world. Depending upon the fluctuation in world currency markets, these international corporations move production from one country to another seeking the lowest wages. For America this means a steadily decreasing wage for low skill manufacturing jobs. This represents a major disturbance in the American labor market, as over 50% of the American labor force is employed in unskilled or low skilled manufacturing employment.(8)

Other nations, when rebuilding their economic infrastructure after World War II, realized that they could not compete with high volume American industries and maintain a high wage for their citizens. Most of the world's industrialized nations sought niche

markets and produced high-value, short-run, flexible, highly customized products which could not be manufactured under the mass-production model in the United States. This type of manufacturing (short-run, customized to individual customer need, flexible and technologically intense) changed the nature of the mass-production process. This new style of manufacturing requires a different types of work structure and worker. This process requires few managers but needs line production workers who are highly skilled and adaptable to keep pace with changing customer demands and changing production methods needed to meet these demands. This type of modern manufacturing is often referred to as a "high performance" model of manufacturing because it relies upon increasing productivity and quality through changing work methods and the use of advanced and emerging technologies. High performance work models require skill intensive processes at the front-line level which cannot be standardized to a single set of operational rules. The work required in a high performance model demands a high skill level because production problems and opportunities for new product lines cannot be anticipated. A high performance organization increases productivity by responding quickly to emerging and potential products/markets. High performance models of production furnish a successful alternative to the Tayloristic mass-production model in that they provide for increased wages through boosting productivity and quality.(9)

Since 1973, America has been at an economic crossroad. The nation can decide to continue with the old Tayloristic mass-production model or develop the infrastructure for implementing high performance models of work. America can compete in two ways: it can reduce wages or improve productivity (10).

The shifting of production models has led to a substantial increase in the number of people "floundering" in the American labor market and in our post-secondary institutions.(11) In fact, many American workers and students are unable to find a career or family supporting employment until late in their 20's, while citizens from other industrialized nations are well established into career paths by the same age. However, the latter half of the 1980s and the 1990s have witnessed many larger and more progressive corporations calling for better performance, or different skill sets, from high school graduates. Many leading edge corporations are demanding graduates who can work in a high performance environment. These high performance corporations need workers who can analyze data, communicate effectively, work with ambiguity, learn quickly and participate in management decisions. Meanwhile, the current secondary educational system continues to produce graduates trained to perform under a mass-production model. American industry has slowly begun to move to a different type of production system and the secondary educational system needs to change to meet the demand from industry.

America needs to develop a system or systems which better prepare graduating high school seniors for the labor market and specifically, to perform the higher order thinking skills required under a high performance model of work. Such a system of transition from secondary education to post-secondary education and/or the world of work is called a School-To-Work system. Due to our reliance on the old Tayloristic mass-production model, America has the worst School-To-Work transition system of any of the world's twenty two industrialized nations.(12) Ample data demonstrates that graduating high school seniors are ill prepared for the labor market.(13)

Much of the blame has been falsely laid at the door step of our secondary schools. The American labor market has dramatically changed during the last twenty years and the "safety net" of high wage, low skill, blue collar manufacturing jobs which were one plentiful no longer exist. Students, who were just as "ill prepared" for the labor market in the 1960s and 70s as students are today, could count on family supporting manufacturing employment. These jobs provided the "safety net" for people who did not, or could not, succeed at the secondary and post-secondary school levels. Generally, workers who did not participate in an apprenticeship program, short-term vocational training or pursuit of an Associate's or Bachelor's degree could still obtain employment which paid well above the poverty level. These types of jobs were virtually eliminated during the 1980's. Therefore, today's students face much larger economic penalties for not succeeding at the secondary and post-secondary school levels.

The United States has a long history of developing educational reforms designed to better prepare students for entering the labor market. Unfortunately, most of these initiatives have been narrow in scope, short on time frames and short on funding (14). This has caused much skepticism within the education community. Consequently, many new reform initiatives such as School-To-Work are attacked by these skeptics, many of whom are professional educators, as just another "educational fad". Such a view is understandable given the large number of educational reform initiatives which have failed in the recent past. However, faced with the global competition and the changing nature of work outlined above, and with calls from business, education and parent groups to better prepare students for the labor market, the political timing was appropriate for the passage

of the Federal School-to-Work Act on May 4, 1994. It is important to reiterate, however, that the passage of the national School-To-Work Act only provides "venture" capital for the establishment of School-To-Work programs with the requirement that local partners in the project must provide for long-term funding after the federal School-To-Work funds have been extinguished. It was necessary to include this provision in the School-To-Work Act to gain the votes necessary for passage of this bill.

However, the absence of long-term funding calls into question, among skeptics, the federal government's commitment to the School-To-Work initiative and the goals this legislation seeks to promote, namely, that of better preparing students for the world of work. This criticism of the National School-To-Work Act (lack of long-term funding), has been adopted by many in the education community and threatens to become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Educators and other necessary School-To-Work consortium partners are leery of using local funds because of cuts and capitations in these local funds and question the seriousness of the federal government's commitment to School-To-Work principals. Consequently, consortium partners or potential partners, will not or might only half-heatedly, support School-To-Work initiatives. However, when federal funds run out, and there is fierce competition for the greatly reduced local funds, there is a real threat that the whole project will be abandoned and those previously skeptical of School-to-Work reform will see their prophesy of yet another failed educational reform movement materialize into reality.

Brief History Of Efforts

In Northwest Wisconsin, there have been many efforts to improve the preparedness of students entering the world of work. Since 1982, the Northwest Wisconsin Concentrated Employment Program (NWCEP) and the Cooperative Educational Service Agency #12 (CESA #12) have been working cooperatively on efforts to better transition students, identified as "At-Risk" of dropping out of school, from secondary to post-secondary education and to the world of work. In 1991 a new initiative called Tech Prep was introduced by the Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College (WITC) which provided additional resources to develop curriculum designed to enhance transition to post-secondary educational institutions and the world of work for all students. A natural link was created between representatives of the NWCEP, CESA #12 and WITC who joined forces to work on these transition issues. This group identified the key gaps in service needed to provide comprehensive transition services to all students. They also identified funds available under a new federal initiative called School-To-Work and applied for federal funding to fulfill the gaps in needed transition services. On October 1, 1994, this group received a federal School-To-Work local implementation grant in the amount of $797,931. This also marked the beginning point of the newly formed Northwest Wisconsin School-To-Work Consortium, of which the three agencies were members, that was established as a requirement of the grant. This federal grant was matched with approximately $700,000 dollars of local funds which were already being used to support School-To-Work efforts for targeted populations.

Review Of Organizational Literature, Especially On Organizational Coalitions

The purpose of this paper is to study the inter-organizational dynamics within the Northwest Wisconsin School-To-Work Consortium, to look at the evolving relationship among the participating organizations and to analyze what has transpired. Consequently, a review of available organizational literature and the determination of elements identified within the literature to use in the analysis is important. In general, the pertinent literature review of organizational coalitions has focused upon several topics including: organizational structure; rational, natural and open systems; the importance of goals, both formal and informal or hidden; inter-organizational structure, both formal and informal; the impact of the three types of environments, regulative, normative and cognitive; and organizational decline theory.

A basic question of this research which needs to be answered is whether or not the School-to-Work system is defined as a "rational system", natural system or open system. I do not believe we can define School-to-Work system as a rational system as this definition is too restrictive. I say that the rational model is too restrictive in defining the Northwest Wisconsin School-to-Work consortium in that the Consortium lacked many Tayloristic components such as top down administration and span of control principles. However, a School-to-Work educational reform must still work in the hierarchial structure of local school districts. Therefore, some aspects of the rational system definition are accurate when describing for School-to-Work consortium. Because our School-to-Work consortium was based upon a developmental model designed for special needs students, the special needs committee within the school districts were the vehicle by which School-

to-Work reforms entered school districts. This does not follow the traditional top down model defining the rational system. By the same token, final decision making within a school district can be very hierarchial. The rational system model also has a singular focus upon the stated goals of the organization. The School-to-Work consortium in Northwest Wisconsin, while having set goals and objectives, has the overall goal of education reform and better preparing children for the world of work. Such a broad and ambiguous goal does not easily fit in with the rational system model.

The natural system description as provided by W. Richard Scott, certainly describes the Northwest Wisconsin School-to-Work consortium during its infancy stages. In particular, the various organizations which comprised the consortium were collectives whose participants were pursuing multiple interests, both disparate and common, but the group recognized the value of perpetuating the School-to-Work consortium as an important resource. However, over time it seems that the open systems definition, that is, organizations are systems of interdependent activities linking shifting coalitions of participants and the systems are embedded in-continuing exchanges with and constituted by - the environments within they operate(15) is a more complete definition. The above definition far more fits the description of the current structure of the School-to-Work Consortium in that the individual participants are currently questioning the value or purpose of this consortium. The coalition of participants is constantly shifting to meet environmental demands. This view of Northwest Wisconsin School-to-Work Consortium actually evolving through the various definitions of organizations is one which I am most comfortable.

The natural systems model and definition is more consistent with the actual construction of the Northwest Wisconsin School-to-Work consortium model at the time of inception. The natural systems model recognizes organizations are first and foremost collectives and that goals are far more complex than the stated goals used in the rational model. The major thrust of the natural system view is that organizations are more than instruments for attaining defined goals; they are, fundamentally, social groups attending to adapt and survive in their particular circumstances.(16) Natural systems theorists stress the behavioral structure and are more interested in examining what is done rather than what is decided or planned. Commitment and motivation loom as more salient variables than search and choice if action rather decision is the focus.(17) The two above definitions are far more consistent with the origins of the development of Northwest Wisconsin's School-to-Work consortium model. Also, Barnard's cooperative system and Selznick's institutional approach are much more consistent with our School-to-Work system than rational model's definition. The natural systems model, however, has several problems when used to defined Northwest Wisconsin's School-to-Work system. Particularly, the emphasis on survival and the importance of managerial systems are not consistent with our model.

The open systems perspective, perhaps, holds the most interesting and perhaps accurate description of Northwest Wisconsin's School-to-Work model. In particular, Boulding's nine levels describing various open systems is very intriguing. The open systems model may best describe the Northwest Wisconsin School-to-Work consortium in that maintaining our system is dependent upon diversity and variety in our environment.

From an open system point of view, there is a close connection between the condition of the environment and the characteristics of the system within it: a complex system cannot maintain its complexity in a simple environment.(18) The Northwest Wisconsin School-to-Work consortium is a direct byproduct of the education's environments' call or need for reform. The School-to-Work system is very much defined by the environment that surrounds it and the future of the organization will be determined by this environment. I also find of great interest Thompson's and Etzioni's assertions that open and closed systems can be complimentary and that open systems can have some closed systems compartments. I find these views also to be compatible with the Northwest Wisconsin's School-to-Work system. Therefore, I am inclined to view the School-to-Work model through the lens of the open systems organizational model. However, the development of the Northwest Wisconsin School-To-Work Consortium has witnessed fractures in the relationships of members on issues of funding and ultimately, survival.

The deterioration of relationships among Consortium members on funding/survival issues requires an examination of goals, both formal and informal or hidden, using the natural systems model. In particular the "...natural systems analysts emphasize that even when the stated goals are actually being pursued, they are never the only goals governing participants' behavior." "thus, formal organizations, like all other social groups, are governed by one overriding goal: survival."(19) Herbert Kaufman also discusses the potentially contradictory nature of coalitions: "Fundamentally, coordination is accomplished by two processes: central direction, which means that the activities of the elements of a system respond chiefly to cues and signals from some common source, and

reciprocal relations, which means that the elements respond to cues and signals from each other."(20) Amitai Etzioni also discusses the importance of intrinsic controls put upon organizational participants through shared beliefs and loyalty to the group's core mission.(21) I wish to investigate which area has more impact, the stated goals of the Consortium or the survival goals of each individual participant. The stated goals of the Northwest Wisconsin School-To-Work Consortium are to develop a comprehensive transition model for all students grades 8 -12 within our 24 participating school districts. To accomplish this, the initial participants hoped to inculcate School-To-Work values into the participating agencies and their staff. Nowhere in the Consortium's records does the issue of survival or maintenance of staff appear as a goal. However, it has become clear over time that survival goals have played a significant role in the development of the Consortium.

Another area examined is inter-organizational structures, both formal and informal. Of particular importance is the outline provided by W. Richard Scott in his book Organizations, in which he gives classifications for organizational environments and context. I would define the Northwest Wisconsin School-To-Work Consortium's inter-organizational environment as a mix of both the disturbed/reactive and turbulent. The Author defines these environments as "disturbed/reactive environment, in which the availability of resources is partially determined by the actions of the organizations themselves, so that a given organization's survival is dependent on the use of strategies that take into account the behavior of competitors" and "turbulent environments, in which all organizational actors are interconnected, so that the organizational relation or network

itself becomes a force that each organization must attempt to take into account."(22) Scott goes on to define the inter-organizational decision making context. Two of these definitions are relevant to the Consortium. The first is the coalitional context: each organizational unit has its own decision-making apparatus and set of goals but collaborates informally and on an ad hoc basis when some of its goals are similar to those of other member units. An example is a group of independent child-care agencies collaborating to obtain a federal grant." The second is the "federative context: organizational units have individual goals but also participate in a structure in order to set more inclusive goals, which must be ratified by member units. An example is social agencies participating in a community council of agencies that has only limited delegated powers."(23) Neither of these definitions fully matches the inter-organizational environment nor context of the Northwest Wisconsin School-To-Work Consortium. However, a combination of the two examples listed does come quite close.

Another area in which the inter-organizational literature has been examined is the impact of the three types of environments: regulative, normative and cognitive. While a major emphasis of this case study is on the regulative or funding availability aspects of the environment, how the School-to-Work Consortium evolved to react to these regulative constraints are played out in the normative and cognitive factors of the environment. Certainly there also have been changes in the internal structure of the Consortium. These structural changes have also had an impact upon the communication methods employed by Consortium members. Both the internal and external environments of the Consortium have been altered. Again Scott offers many insights on internal and external environment

but so do Davis and Lawrence who stated that "Uncertainty in the external environment calls for an enriched information-processing capacity within the organization."(24) I will look at certainty in the external environment and if an information rich processing capacity was established by the Consortium. I will discuss the evolution of funding and organizational structure and its impact upon the regulative, normative and cognitive environments of the Consortium later in the paper.

Finally, when we examine declining organizations, the administrative theory forwarded by Charles H. Levine in Managing Fiscal Stress: The Crisis in the Public Sector, outlines a variety of situations which mirror what is currently happening within the Consortium. In particular, environmental entropy, political venerability, and organization atrophy are components of organization decline which are currently affecting Northwest Wisconsin School-to-Work Consortium. I want to look at the development stages of the Consortium to determine if our current consortia arrangement was the best method of organization, and if it ever was possible to turn the Consortium into a separate, more stable organization/arrangement.

Concepts and Ideas from the Literature Review Used in the Case Study

In addition to the general categories outlined above, I will analyze the inter-organizational relationships as they relate to the incentives to participate in the Consortium, the levels of participation within the Consortium, the rules of participation within the Consortium, protection of an organization's technical core, resource acquisition, and the missions of the individual agencies and the Consortium as a whole. I wish to analyze the Consortium in terms of the nature of the constituent organizations;

environmental changes both within the Consortium and within the individual participating agencies and changes in the nature of the relationship between Consortium members. I will examine why these organizations participate in the Consortium, how much they did participate, what was the depths of the relationships and what were the rules or context by which the organizations participated? I will look at formal verses informal relationships and the organizational cultures in an attempt to define what it is that holds these relationships together. I also wish to examine the technical core of the Consortium and any impact threats to this technical core may have had upon the relationships. The notion of threats to the technical core of an organization is outlined by W. Richard Scott but the idea is forwarded by James D. Thompson who developed a Levels Model which seeks to integrate the three formal systems views(rational, natural and open) (25) Scott states that individuals "... must feel that their interests are safe guarded"(26) and that "Organizations that exhibit high reliability and/or high accountability are more likely to survive, given a reasonable degree of environmental stability."(27) The examination of threats to the technical core also folds into another area needing examination with is the ability of the Consortium to acquire resources. The importance of resource acquisition is described by Scott as creating "dependencies between organizations and external units. How important and how scarce these resources are determine the nature and the extent of organizational dependency. Dependency is the obverse of power(Emerson, 1962). Economic dependencies give rise to political problems and may succumb to political solutions."(28) I wish to characterize the general direction of change taking place in the environments of the Consortium.

CHAPTER III

CASE STUDY

The Northwest Wisconsin Environment

The Northwest Wisconsin Concentrated Employment Program's Service Delivery Area includes over 10,000 square miles of land encompassing the ten northwest counties of Ashland, Bayfield, Burnett, Douglas, Iron, Price, Rusk, Sawyer, Taylor, and Washburn counties. The total population of the area is less than 170,000 people(29). Needless to say, the area is very rural and sparsely populated. In areas as rural and as sparsely populated as Northwestern Wisconsin, partnerships among employment and training agencies and educational institutions are not just a nice thing to have - they are absolutely necessary in order to leverage scarce resources and provide a full array of services to eligible populations.

In this chapter I will provide a brief outline of each of the participating agencies, their role outside and within the Consortium, their mission, structure and history. I will then examine the internal behavioral norms of each agency describing how participants interact within their own realm and how their organizational behavior processes have an impact on the relationships within the Consortium. I will then describe how the relationships were formed prior to the actual creation of the consortium. I will explain how the Consortium

is structured at the administrative or Board level and at the service delivery or field level. I will then look at the history of the Consortium in terms of four stages along a continuum as discussed in the previous chapter (origins of the consortium; the immediate post receipt of the grant; the implementation period; and the post implementation period). Along this continuum with four stages I will analyze the inter-organizational relationships as they relate to the incentives to participate in the Consortium, the levels of participation within the Consortium, the rules of participation within the Consortium, and the missions of the individual agencies and the Consortium as a whole.

The Organizational Actors

The Northwest Wisconsin Concentrated Employment Program (NWCEP) is one of the oldest employment and training programs in the nation. Founded in 1968, it is only one of four national Rural Concentrated Employment Programs left in the nation responsible for training youth and adult economically disadvantaged citizens. It has two Boards of Directors: the NWCEP board comprised of the ten county Board Chairmen and a Private Industry Council comprised of private and public sector representatives. The NWCEP Board of Directors also comprise the Northwest Regional Planning Commission's Board of Directors, an economic development agency covering the identical geographic region. The Northwest Regional Planning Commission is one of the oldest and most active Regional Planning Commissions in the Nation.

The Cooperative Educational Service Agency #12 (CESA#12) has been coordinating educational services for the area's school districts since 1965. This agency is also an older but very active Educational Service Agency. The CESA #12 has a Board of Control

comprised of elected school board members from represented schools and meets monthly with all area school district administrators. These two boards act as a governance board and planning board respectively.

The Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College has worked closely with the Northwest Wisconsin Concentrated Employment Program in delivering occupational classroom training for the area's economically disadvantaged population. The Technical College also has a long history of working with area school districts and has mutual Board of Directors' members with the Cooperative Educational Service Agency #12, Local School Districts and the Private Industry Council. There is a history of cooperation and coordinated service delivery in Northwest Wisconsin with the above mentioned agencies. Furthermore, there is a general cooperative history among most service providers in the area which tie these agencies together due to the sparse population, vast geographic area, scarcity of resources and political connections at the Board level.

All three agencies (NWCEP, CESA#12 and WITC) are older educational/social service type agencies with a successful track record of past performance. All three agencies have a fairly rigid bureaucratic structure and similar cultures. The agencies also share a similar size and complexity at their respective administrative levels. All three agencies have somewhat similar missions. The mission of the NWCEP is to provide job training and placement opportunities to the economically disadvantaged of Northwest Wisconsin. The mission of WITC is to provide technical college courses which will improve the prospects for job opportunities to the citizens of Northwest Wisconsin. CESA#12 has a mission of assisting the school districts in Northwest Wisconsin by

offering shared services. An example is that few small rural school districts in the area can afford to retain a full-time At-Risk Coordinator. Because many districts want to offer At-Risk service but are unable to afford a full-time Coordinator, CESA#12 can hire a At-Risk Coordinator and "loan" the Coordinator out to the districts who want to offer this service. CESA#12 also provides school districts with library materials and foreign language teachers. Due to the small budgets and lack of resources among rural northwest Wisconsin school districts, CESA#12 also writes many of the federal, state and private foundation grants on behalf of these school districts. Consequently, CESA#12 has established itself as an advocate for area schools. Northwest Wisconsin school districts have little political clout individually and find that banding together under the "CESA#12 umbrella" provides the area with a greater voice with policy makers and grant givers. This history of acting as the voice for area schools puts CESA#12 in a leadership role with regard to education reform among the school districts. It is most often through CESA#12 that new educational initiatives are introduced to area schools.

Internal Behavioral Norms

A significant difference in behavior and process exists between the educational institutions (CESA#12 and WITC) and the employment and training agencies (NWCEP/NWPIC). With the educational community, it appears that a high degree of communication and consensus are the operative norm as part of the decision making process. This creates the need for many meetings to ensure that all effected staff are in agreement prior to implementing new policy. The process by which a decision is made appears to be as critical as the actual decision within the educational community. This

may be due to the high degree of democratization imbedded in the educational culture. Both CESA #12 and WITC have unionized staff and elected board members. Meanwhile, the NWCEP, with one board consisting of business leaders, appears to be less interested consensus and more interested in expediency. There appears to be slight regard for ensuring input from all affected staff but a high regard for quickness and establishing evaluation criteria in the decision making process. It seems that it is better to make a poor decision rather than wait and make no decision at all. This bias in favor of quick decision making may be due to the fact that the NWCEP has non-union staff and has as one of its Boards appointed business leaders who are used to making command decisions. These differences in behavior and process have created tension at several School-To-Work Consortium meetings. While the education community has attempted to bring businesses to the table, the method by which business have been asked to participate has not been successful. Educators often do not speak the same language as business. One school district put out a lengthy questionnaire to area business and was surprised when it received little response. The school district did not understand that business would not take the time to complete a lengthy questionnaire. By the same token, business has laid much of the blame for poor student preparation and test scores at the door steps of the schools. Consequently, schools are justifiably leery of inviting a group to the table who have berated the schools publicly. Both the CESA#12 and NWCEP have had a long-term commitments to serving the economically disadvantaged and have experienced much success with serving this population. Both agencies have committed significant amounts of resources and staff to serving this specific population over many years. WITC has not

had a similar track record of serving the economically disadvantaged. In particular, WITC, as a post high school technical college, had little experience serving economically disadvantaged youth.

These differences in organizational behavior and process, while sometimes causing tension, have been a minor issue. It is important to reiterate the nature of the relationships between representatives of NWCEP, WITC and CESA#12 at the inception of the School-To-Work project, as the relationships between these three individuals was a critical component in the development of this Consortium. The relationship between these three individuals was rooted in a strong desire to improve the educational opportunities for area students. A strong sense of mission and purpose was developed. This sense of purpose was developed over several years of first cooperative and it then grew into collaborative efforts to bring about educational reform based upon special education and transitioning initiatives. Each person had dedicated many hours to a variety of educational reform projects in which all three members not only participated, but had leadership roles. The Transition Leadership Cadre, another educational initiative in which all three members were involved, was also a strong team building exercise. This gave the two members from education an opportunity to fully instruct the employment and training member in the theoretical foundations of special education as it related to transitioning and School-To-Work principles. The Transition Leadership Cadre met at UW. Madison on weekends, thereby affording these members time to focus solely upon transition planning and giving each member insight to each other's agency's culture and behavioral norms.

The strong sense of purpose and commitment shared by these three members at the

inception of the School-To-Work project gave the Consortium a single focus. The environment in which this program developed up was energetic, hopeful, collaborative and one in which all things were possible. The group had a strategy and solid working relationships in place prior to receiving funding. However, the group members were cognizant of the fact that funding was a critical need which had to be met prior to full implementation of the group's concepts. All were in agreement that lack of funding, to provide the area with needed staff, was the single barrier to the full development of a comprehensive School-To-Work system. The group was internally focused with regard to improving the service to the area and using existing structures to initiate School-To-Work. However, the group was externally focused with regard to long term funding. The focus upon the need for funding is what inspired the group to write for federal School-To-Work funds. Once the funding was received, all were in agreement on how the initial funds were to be spent and how the group would makeup for the federal funds once they had ended. In an analysis the important characteristics of the Consortium at its inception, previous collaborative efforts with educational reform initiatives, a shared mission and vision for future educational reform, the need for money and the relationship among the three staff from NWCEP, CESA#12 and WITC stand-out as four critical factors.

The Pre-consortium Stage - 1982 Through 1994

As stated earlier, I will look at the history of the Consortium in terms of four stages along a continuum. The first stage is the Origins of the Consortium, the period from 1982 to 1994; the second stage is the Immediate Post Receipt of the Grant, the period from May 4, 1994 to December 31, 1994; the third stage is the Implementation Period when the

Consortium was federally funded, from January 1, 1995, to January 20, 1996; and the fourth and final stage is the Post Implementation period when the Consortium received substantial funding cuts, from January 21, 1996 to present. Along this continuum of four stages in time, I will analyze the inter-organizational relationships as they relate to the incentives to participate in the Consortium, the levels of participation within the Consortium, the rules of participation within the Consortium, and the missions of the individual agencies and the Consortium as a whole.

In 1982, the Northwest Wisconsin Private Industry Council (NWPIC) in cooperation with the Northwest Wisconsin Concentrated Employment Program's (NWCEP) Board of Director's piloted a Job Training Partnership Act funded At-Risk Program. The purpose of the program was to provide Job Training Partnership Act eligible youth, who were identified as "At-Risk" of dropping out of school, with comprehensive counseling, career planning and work-based educational opportunities (job training and placement). The NWPIC and NWCEP contracted with the Cooperative Educational Service Agency #12 to deliver these services through local school districts. The funds for the project were used by the Cooperative Educational Service Agency #12 to hire At-Risk Coordinators who delivered the comprehensive counseling, career planning and work-based educational opportunities. Some were Cooperative Educational Service Agency #12 employees and in some districts, funds were "passed-through" to the local district who in turn hired an At-Risk Coordinator as a district employee. The time an At-Risk Coordinator would spend at a particular district, or the amount of funds passed-through to a district for hiring its own Coordinator, was determined by enrollment levels. Few schools had enough enrollment to

merit a full-time At-Risk Coordinator for an individual district. From program year 1982 to 1986, the At-Risk Program was highly successful. During 1986, local school districts began to provide matching dollars to the Job Training Partnership Act funds to provide these successful services to all youth identified as being "at-risk" thereby providing an opportunity for non-Job Training Partnership Act eligible students to participate in the program. From 1986 to 1994, program services were continually refined and redefined to best meet the needs of at-risk youth.

During the summer of 1989, under the leadership of the NWPIC and NWCEP, a round table discussion was held which consisted of agency heads from a variety of education, employment and training programs in Northwestern Wisconsin. The purpose of this initial meeting was to discuss ways in which local service providers could eliminate any existing duplication (such as having program participants fill out multiple applications which asked for similar information), share pertinent participation information and collaborate jointly to better utilize program funds. After this initial meeting, it was decided to continue the process. A 3C's (Cooperation, Coordination and Collaboration) steering committee was formed which began to meet regularly to continue the mission of eliminating duplicative services, sharing information and collaborating on initiatives to leverage scarce dollars. The 3C's committee provided a non-threatening mechanism to discuss how best to utilize existing dollars and set the tone for collaborative efforts to obtain additional funds across agency lines. Up until this point, most meetings of this nature only included two or three agencies and had a specific short-term focus. The role of the 3C's committee was important to the development of the Northwest Wisconsin

School-To-Work Consortium because it established a forum for the major partners in the consortium to meet regularly as a group to learn about each other's programs.

During the Summer of 1991, the Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College began administering a Tech Prep grant. The purpose of Tech Prep initially was to inform secondary students and parents of the benefits of technical careers and technical college training. In the summer of 1992, this focus was greatly broadened to encompass many aspects of educational reform, specifically, improving the preparedness of all students leaving secondary institutions. Committees were established to work on specific issues relating to this broader focus. One of the committees was called Guidance and Special Needs. Its purpose was to improve the services delivered to special needs secondary students with a focus on the guidance aspect of Tech Prep. It is important to understand that most of the innovative educational reforms around the nation were coming from special needs populations, particularly with regard to career guidance, counseling and transition services to post-secondary institutions and the world of work. This committee consisted of members who were also active on the 3C's Steering Committee and were delivering services under the At-Risk program.

The Guidance and Special Needs Committee was an important committee because it consisted of members who had been working together for some time and had access to the most innovative and up-to-date strategies regarding guidance, career planning, and transitioning special needs students from secondary school to post secondary school or to the world of work. The Guidance and Special Needs Committee helped to strengthen the network which had existed in and among local school districts with the At-Risk

Coordinators by including guidance and teaching staff. Regular meetings now were taking place at the district level to improve guidance and counseling services, with technical assistance being provided by the Guidance and Special Needs Committee and funding from the Tech Prep grant. This network was the foundation upon which the School-to-Work system was built.

During this same time period, a grant became available to improve the service levels for disabled students in this area. The grant required that a Cadre from this area be formed and that a comprehensive plan for transitioning disabled students from secondary (grades 8-12) to post secondary school and/or the world of work be developed. The Guidance and Special Needs Committee formed the Transition Leadership Cadre of existing Committee members consisting of representatives from NWCEP/NWPIC, CESA #12, WITC and local school districts. The work of the Transition Leadership Cadre helped to solidify the relationships between key members of NWCEP, CESA#12 and WITC.

A solid working relationship rooted in the desire to bring about educational reform developed between the At-Risk Coordinator from CESA#12, the Tech Prep Coordinator from WITC and the Executive Director of the NWCEP/NWPIC. Over the course of the next year (1993 -1994), a plan detailing all the services available to disabled students and a methodology to transition disabled students from secondary school to post secondary school and/or the world of work was developed for the area. The Guidance and Special Needs Committee shared this plan with local school districts and upon adoption began the process of implementing the plan. This plan for transitioning disabled students and

cataloging existing resources is the same plan used in School-To-Work system. Again, the most innovative strategies for educational reform have been coming from the special needs area. Rather than develop a separate School-To-Work model for non-disabled students, it made sense to expand the plan for transitioning disabled students to encompass all students. This idea of expanding the transition system developed for disabled students to all students transition is the core of the Consortium's School-To-Work thinking.

It is important to note that Tech Prep was a School-Based initiative. The Tech Prep grant was funding the work of its committees, which were educating teachers on the need to develop better methods of transitioning students, to develop articulation agreements with post-secondary institutions and to rewrite curriculum to incorporate career guidance techniques. Lack of funds prevented the hiring of staff to deliver school-based activities to all students. The Work-Based portion (providing work sites for all students and ensuring these sites matched a student's career plan) of the comprehensive transition plan was still lacking and identified by the group as a key need area. However, lack of funds also prevented the work-based portion from becoming developed.

The Immediate Post Receipt of the Grant Period - May 4, 1994-to-December 31, 1994

The need for funding to support staff to deliver school-based activities and work-based activities to all students was the primary catalyst for the development of the Northwest Wisconsin School-To-Work Consortium. During the spring of 1994, an ad hoc committee consisting of the NWPIC, NWCEP Board of Directors, NWCEP staff, WITC, CESA #12, the Job Service, organized labor and Department of Health and Human Services representatives met for the purpose of developing a proposal to respond

to the Department of Labor's request for proposals for local School-To-Work implementation grants. The proposal was formed by these key partners sitting around a table and speculating as to how they would develop a School-To-Work system if they had all the money in the world.

The key thinking and members driving the plan/grant development of this group were same three people who had been working together on transition issues: the At-Risk Coordinator from CESA#12, the Tech Prep Coordinator from WITC and the Executive Director of the NWCEP/NWPIC. All three had cultivated a solid working relationship and had developed several new transition programs for the area. All three members had worked together on a number of committees which developed educational reform initiatives including the 3C's Committee, Guidance and Special Needs Committee of Tech Prep, the Youth Career Counseling Center Committee and the Transition Leadership Cadre. This smaller "core" group had a full understanding of the transition services which were already in place and the services/funding which were sorely needed in individual school districts, in employment agencies and across Northwest Wisconsin. This core group had a history of brainstorming new ideas and success with implementing new initiatives. This group had many discussions about each other's agency's funding and how those funds could be used to meet reform goals. Consequently, the group shared scarce funds across agency lines, and trusted each other's judgement.

The strategic planning for the Local School-To-Work Opportunities grant followed two tracks. The first track was to develop a continuum of services. Group members asked themselves "What kind of School-To-Work services should be provided to children

between grades 8-12"? The logical answer to this question was the comprehensive transition plan which was developed for disabled students. This plan has been refined into a one page visual diagram called the "Picket Fence Model". The second track was to determine how that continuum of services (Picket Fence) would be delivered at participating school districts and by whom.

The development of the Picket Fence model was instrumental to the Consortium and it appears as Appendix A to this paper. The Picket Fence model gave all partners a contextual framework within which to concretely understand what the Northwest Wisconsin School-To-Work Consortium was attempting to build across the partnering school districts. School-To-Work has many, many definitions and creates numerous debates as to what is actually meant by the term School-To-Work and how does one define a School-To-Work system (30). A primary reason for this is the lack of a common definition of exactly what School-To-Work is and is not is the ambiguity found in the School-To-Work Act. The Purpose Statement of the federal School-To-Work Opportunities Act is very large. In fact, it has fourteen parts! (31) An advantage of the Northwest Wisconsin School-to-Work Consortium was that all of the key players had been working on educational reform efforts, particularly in the area of improved transitioning for special populations (At-Risk and Disabled students), for many years and it became abundantly clear to us that our efforts encompassed all of the points in the purpose statement of the Federal School-To-Work Act. It is easy to see why many Consortiums get caught in the quagmire of attempting to define exactly what School-To-Work is rather than getting onto the important work of implementing school reform. This

Consortium, by developing the Picket Fence model, was able to side step many debates which sapped the energies of other School-To-Work Consortiums. When one would question what was exactly meant by School-To-Work, they would be handed a copy of the Picket Fence model and told "This is what the group means by School-To-Work". Teachers, employers, parents, administrators, school board members, job training staff and students could all easily understand what the group was attempting to build simply by looking at the Picket Fence model.

The process of defining how and who would deliver the School-To-Work services identified in the Picket Fence Model had already begun through the efforts of the At-Risk program and the Guidance and Special Needs Committee. At Risk Coordinators, hired by CESA#12, were delivering school-based educational services to defined population within the school districts and the Tech Prep grant provided funding to reshape curriculum to incorporate applied lessons which would help students connect the course work with the "real world". However, the absence of staff to deliver the work-based portion (job training and placement) for all students and the lack of enough guidance staff to serve all students were critical needs identified as part of the grant writing process and, consequently, the School-To-Work grant funded these needed positions.

On October 1, 1994, the Northwest Wisconsin School-To-Work Consortium received a federal School-To-Work local implementation grant for year one (October 1, 1994, through January 20, 1996) in the amount of $797,931 in response to the proposal submitted by the Consortium. The reason for this lengthy grant period was that it took some time for the Consortium to hire all of the necessary staff and an extension was

granted to expend the funds which were unspent at the beginning of the grant period. This federal grant was matched with approximately $700,000 dollars of local funds which were already being used to support School-To-Work efforts for targeted populations. The Federal School-To-Work Act only provides "venture" capital for the establishment of School-To-Work programs with the intention that local partners in the project will provide for long-term funding after the federal School-To-Work funds have been extinguished. As part of the bi-partisan effort to get national School-To-Work legislation passed, it was necessary to include a provision to end or "sun-set" School-To-Work funding. National School-To-Work funds, provided to individual states, expire after five years. Without this provision, the legislation would have lost many of its "conservative" supporters.

The Consortium originally applied for $1,069,462 in federal School-To-Work funding. The National School-To-Work office negotiated this initial request down to the final grant award of $797,931. When negotiating this decrease from the original request, it was agreed upon that the work-based components could sustain the largest cuts in initial funding. While all three agencies were cut from their original request, the NWCEP sustained the greatest reductions. The NWCEP had originally requested funding for eight School-To-Work Business Liaisons and this number was reduced to four. It was felt that the school-based work activities of our School-To-Work system could be quickly established as the NWCEP had existing staff who could help to develop work-sites. It was also agreed that the school-based activities should be protected from too many cuts at the initial stages as staffing in this area was a critical need if systemic reform were to

occur. Therefore, the first year allocation of was divided as follows:

CESA#12 = $396,438 (49.7%), NWCEP = $314,316 (39.4%), WITC = $87,132 (10.9%)

In addition to the federal funds, $745,788 dollars were being used to support existing School-To-Work activities for targeted populations from local and other federal "pass-through" funds. These funds were used as match. These funds consisted of Tech Prep funds, Carl Perkins funds, local school district funds and JTPA 8%, JTPA Title II-C and JTPA Title II-B funds. The bulk of the matching funds consisted of JTPA funds administered by the NWCEP and used to fund CESA#12 At-Risk Coordinators for school term and summer school activities. It was planned that local school districts would eventually provide 100% funding for the school-based activities and JTPA and private foundations and public grants would fund the work-based activities and connecting activities.

All of the Consortium partners brought matching funds to the table. However, all of our funds were highly targeted to special populations that each agency specialized in serving. All of the match monies were closely linked to each agency's programs. An example is the large amount of JTPA funds used as match. JTPA program funds can only be expended on JTPA eligible program participants. The requirements for JTPA eligibility can be restrictive. A highly matched activity such as School-To-Work program which serves the general public calls into question the integrity of JTPA funds. However, so long as there is an ample amount of other dollars available to match the JTPA funds and JTPA eligible program participants are being enrolled, this type of funding mechanism will not be questioned.

Administrative Structure Characteristics

Due to the established relationship which existed between members of this "core group" the Northwest Wisconsin Concentrated Employment Program, the Cooperative Educational Services Agency #12 and the Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College are the main agencies responsible for day-to-day operations of the Northwest Wisconsin School-To-Work Consortium. When developing the School-To-Work grant, all three agencies wrote themselves into the proposal. While on the surface this may seem self-serving, there were identifiable needs which each of these agencies was best suited to address. Specifically, each agency had a history of delivering school-based activities, work-based activities and connecting activities required by the School-To-Work grant. For the purpose of the grant it was required that a consortium of business, labor, education (secondary & post secondary), local elected officials and employment and training personnel be established. Consequently, the Northwest Wisconsin School-To-Work Consortium has the following seven members: the At-Risk Coordinator from CESA#12, the Tech Prep Coordinator from WITC and the Executive Director of the NWCEP/NWPIC, a private businessman who is also the chairman of the NWPIC, a representative from a local Labor Council who is also a member of the NWPIC, the chief local elected official from the ten northwest counties who is also chairman of the NWCEP, and a teacher from a local school district who has been active on the Tech Prep Guidance and Special Needs Committee.

While the NWPIC is the School-To-Work grant recipient, the Northwest Wisconsin School-To-Work Consortium is actually responsible for the overall administration of

system. The overall planning or development of a "system" of service delivery for the Northwest Wisconsin School-To-Work Consortium was already conceptually in place prior to the first meeting of the official Consortium. It had been developed over the course of several years across many educational reform initiatives discussed earlier.

The primary focus of the Northwest Wisconsin School-To-Work Consortium has been the implementation and maintenance of the system. The Consortium provides technical assistance to participating local school districts and area employers. While this is no small task, it is important to understand that the Consortium has not been a planning body, but rather a implementation, technical assistance and governance structure. This change in membership along with the opportunity to now implement what had been planned caused a change in the relationships among those who were previously responsible for conceptualization and planning. The energies of the members shifted to a more internal focus because each member was ensuring that their agency was implementing the requirements of the School-To-Work grant.

Another change which influenced the relationships of the group was the hiring of professional staff. While all three agencies have hired a significant number of staff as part of the School-To-Work effort, a School-To-Work Specialist was hired by the NWCEP, as staff to the Consortium with the responsibility of carrying-out directions given by the Consortium. The primary focus of this position was implementation and maintenance of the School-To-Work system and seeking additional funds. While this position relieved many of the pressures on individual group members, it also altered the nature of the relationships as Consortium members were now communicating with the staff person

rather than each other as they did prior to having available staff. The result was a more formal and distant type of communication.

Local Structure Characteristics

In addition to the Northwest Wisconsin School-To-Work Consortium's administrative and technical assistance group, each participating local school district established teams which addressed School-To-Work issues within that particular district. These local teams reported to the administrative Consortium with policy recommendations. These local teams were not new structures but ones which were established to address other educational reform or school improvement issues. Through the efforts of previously mentioned educational reform efforts and work by CESA#12, most school districts had active and successful school improvement teams in place. Because School-To-Work is a system building effort rather than the adding-on of another component, it made sense to use existing structures whenever feasible.

This brought up another issue with regard to structure and how School-To-Work programs have been implemented within the area. Due to CESA#12 and NWCEP's role throughout the 1980s with At-Risk programming, a solid foundation of School-to-Work services were already in place but only for students identified as At-Risk. During the 1980s, many of the funds available to develop new educational initiatives were targeted to special needs populations. This was especially true of improving "transition services" and building bridges between high school and the world of work. Consequently, CESA #12 and NWCEP had established themselves as leaders in this area, especially among school districts, as new funding for assisting special needs students flowed through these two

agencies. The end result of this was that a network of teachers and counselors specializing in transition services for special needs students became established in the twenty four school districts that now represented the Northwest Wisconsin School-To-Work Consortium at the local level. The special needs teachers and counselors within these school districts often acted as the catalysts in bringing about new educational programs or reforms. While they are overall greatly respected among their peers, they are also viewed with some skepticism since these staff are the "messengers" carrying news which is often viewed as more work. These special needs staff are also strong advocates on behalf of their students. Often, they must challenge their administrations to provide services to special needs students. These services are above and beyond those available to regular education students and this advocacy role combined with the "messenger of more work" role sometimes creates resentment among administrators and regular education staff. Many of the new educational reform initiatives in northwest Wisconsin were developed and instituted through this group of special needs teachers and counselors. While this group allowed the Consortium to quickly implement School-To-Work systems, it also could represent a problem for the Consortium as it is not yet known how much support has been built for School-To-Work among administrators, school board members and regular education staff. If School-To-Work was to be sustained with local funding when the federal funds are extinguished, then strong support was necessary with the key policy makers and administrators.

When the School-To-Work funds became available, each participating agency quickly hired staff who would fill the needs identified as part of the At-Risk, Tech Prep, Transition

Plan, 3C's Committee and ultimately, the School-To-Work planning process. CESA#12 used its funds to support eighteen School-To-Work Coordinators located within area school districts. Funds were also "passed-through" CESA#12 to local school districts which, in turn, hired their own School-To-Work Coordinators. This was a significant increase in staffing levels over the few At-Risk Coordinators who were previously delivering transition services to At-Risk youth. The existing At-Risk Coordinators evolved into School-To-Work Coordinators. They delivered similar services as before, but now they were offering services to all students. The plan to support this increase in school-based staff after the School-To-Work funds had run out was to have local school districts begin to provide a match increasing over the term of the School-To-Work grant, thus providing a 100% match when the federal funds ended. It was also planned to use existing Carl Perkins and JTPA 8 percent funding as matching monies. These two existing funding streams previously were used to support At-Risk Coordinators and would now support the increased role of the School-To-Work Coordinators.

NWCEP hired six additional staff, four School-To-Work Business Liaisons who were responsible for developing the work-based activities for all students, a School-To-Work Specialist who was responsible for overall administration of the School-To Work grant and acted as staff to the Consortium, and a clerical support person was also hired to assist the School-To-Work Specialist. The plan to support these staff after the School-To-Work funds had run out was to use JTPA Title II-C and Title II-B funds, and seek additional support through private foundations and public grants.

WITC hired a School-To-Work Assessment Coordinator who provided testing and educational/vocational plan development for all students. The plan to support this position after the School-To-Work funds had run out was to use Tech Prep funding which was currently being used by WITC to support curriculum development and to seek additional support through private foundations and public grants.

Implementation Period - January 1, 1995 Through January 20, 1996

During this period Northwest Wisconsin School-To-Work Consortium was receiving federal funding. The federal grant was scheduled to end on January 20, 1996; however, state funding would begin prior to exhausting federal funds. In year two of the project (October 1, 1995 through September 30, 1996) the Consortium received $570,000 which was comprised of $342,000 in federal funds and $228,000 from State of Wisconsin School -To-Work funds which in turn the state received from a federal implementation grant. These funds "passed-through" the state to the Northwest Wisconsin School-To-Work Consortium. While the Consortium had plenty of funds in year two, it became apparent that in year three, funding would be dramatically cut. Also during this period the Northwest Wisconsin School-To-Work Consortium partners spent numerous hours working with front line staff (teachers, counselors and job developers) ensuring a shared vision of what was exactly meant by School-To-Work and assisting to define each school district's plans for the program. One of the strengths of the Northwest Wisconsin School-To-Work Consortium is that each of the three partner agencies did not have to significantly change its focus to make the new School-To-Work system a success. Each of the three participating agencies did not alter its mission and each was allowed to use the

expertise it had developed over its long history. A great advantage enjoyed by this Consortium was its foundation on existing, formal relationships among the partners (the dearth of services in rural areas has the positive corollary of forcing agencies and providers to work together, pooling resources). The NWPIC and NWCEP brought employers and work-based learning opportunities and experience to the table, WITC contributed its expertise in assessment and Tech Prep issues, and CESA#12 engaged both individual school districts and At Risk programming, ensuring that School-To-Work services in northwest Wisconsin would be open to all students. Each agency within the Consortium continued to deliver services they had in the past but with a greatly expanded population base. CESA#12, prior to the School-To-Work grant delivered school-based learning services (teaching & counseling) but only to At-Risk students. Under School-To-Work, CESA#12 delivers similar services to ALL students. NWCEP, prior to the School-To-Work grant delivered work-based services (job training and placement) but only to JTPA eligible youth. Under School-To-Work, NWCEP delivers similar services to ALL students. WITC, prior to the School-To-Work grant delivered connecting activities (assessment of student's interest, aptitudes and abilities) but only to targeted populations. Under School-To-Work, WITC delivers similar services to ALL students.

When developing the School-To-Work system model and identifying which components would be considered school-based, work-based and connecting activities, the Consortium partners attempted to work within existing structures allowing each agency to play to its strengths. Consequently, CESA#12 had the primary responsibility for school-based activities; NWCEP had the primary responsibilities for work-based activities, and

WITC had the primary responsibility for connecting activities. While each agency had primary responsibility for one of the three required activities and the components which encompass the activity, some of the components and agency responsibilities did overlap

The Northwest Wisconsin School-To-Work Consortium was unique in that it sought to establish systemic reform rather than "adding-on" an another School-To-Work component(s). From its inception, the Consortium sought to develop a method by which career/educational transition services would be incorporated into every classroom, work-site, and counseling session. For the purposes of the grant, grades eight through twelve were identified as the target group to receive services. Although the group felt that School-To-Work awareness should begin as early as kindergarten and continue through post-secondary school and work, it needed to define a beginning point. Key components of the system were identified as establishing a career portfolio process, increasing the level of applied classes, rewriting existing academic curriculum incorporating applied lessons, providing increased career counseling, and developing a career plan and educational plan. These services would be available to all students and not just those students identified as special needs or members of other target groups. Also, a variety of work-based educational opportunities would be provided to infuse career planning into each academic curriculum and to increase the level of applied learning opportunities. All of the above ensured that school-based learning was linked with work-based learning opportunities. All students would select a career major and identify school-based (classes) and work-based (employment) opportunities which focused upon that career major, thereby ensuring that academic plans were congruent with vocational plans. An ideal School-To-Work model

was developed called the "Picket Fence". This model incorporated every aspect and component of the services available to students along a continuum from eighth through twelfth grade. While no school had every component in place, it provided all partners with a model which helped them to identify the missing components, thereby giving all local school district partners goals on which components to develop. This model also served as a discussion tool for local school districts in developing their plans for school improvement. Most school districts adopted School-To-Work principles as part of their overall school district improvement plans. This is an important aspect of the Consortium. Each school district was allowed to develop its own plans based upon local needs rather than having to accept which School-To-Work components needed to be developed or strengthened. This allowed local districts the flexibility to implement a School-To-Work system which made the most sense for the local area.

One of the most interesting developments was that many local school districts implemented youth run enterprises whereby students would start their own corporation. The students would develop corporate papers, sell stock, divide into work-teams such as marketing, product development engineering, sales and manufacturing. The students would be responsible for all aspects of the corporation. These projects often incorporated several classes such as technology education, economics and science. Such projects also speeded up the need for the implementation of other School-To-Work components such as block scheduling and applied academics. Projects such as youth run enterprises are necessary in rural areas which lack the diversified employment base to provide students with a wide breadth of work-based learning opportunities. Allowing local school districts

the flexibility to develop their own school improvement models within the context of the Picket Fence frame-work helped to forward School-To-Work principles which had "buy in" at the local level.

During the initial formative months of the Consortium, nearly all pressures were internal. These pressures were fueled by the need to hire and train new staff, and educate staff and administrators indirectly involved with the School-To-Work system developing short and long term goals for the system. Initially, there were few external pressures placed upon the Consortium. After this starting period, some stresses were brought from outside agencies who requested copies of the proposal and sought technical assistance with their School-To-Work systems. The Consortium received national recognition as one of only 15 locally funded agencies and one of only four Private Industry Councils in the entire nation to receive a national School-To-Work Local Implementation grant. It also was one of the few rural areas to receive funding. Consequently, the Consortium was inundated with requests for information and technical assistance. On a daily basis, the Consortium partners received requests for documentation about its efforts. This burden fell more heavily upon the NWPIC/NWCEP as it was the grant recipient. It was requested to provide presentations to local areas about how the Consortium was organized and the progress it was making. In particular, there were many requests from rural areas who were interested in the possibility of replicating parts of the model in their area. Consortium members spent numerous hours, both on the telephone and in person, answering questions from and providing technical assistance to, other local School-To-Work Consortiums. Due to the number of requests received, a workshop presentation

was developed that was presented to no less than 12 national, state and local organizations seeking information about the consortium. The national and state of Wisconsin School-To-Work offices were also making requests upon the Consortium for information as to its progress. Numerous requests to complete surveys and answer questionnaires were received which often caused the Consortium to track new information on students or created the need for new methods of tracking data which strained the relationship with local school districts, who often times bore the brunt of the data tracking requirements. During the first two and one-half years of the Consortium, these demands for information were persistent and sometimes seemed overwhelming. Many Consortium meetings were held to discuss how to track the services being offered to students and the need for keeping greater levels of information. While the NWPIC/NWCEP felt more documentation was required by teachers on individual students, CESA#12 and WITC argued that this would be burdensome. A consensus was reached by having records kept on all students but by class, rather than by student, in the larger school districts.

At the Consortium level, evolution took two tracks: one based on funding and the other based on changes in composition. I will discuss the evolution of funding later in the paper. With regard to composition, the addition of members to the "core group" of the three agency representatives was required for the purpose of the federal School-To-Work grant. The additional four members with the added fiscal responsibility of administering a nearly $1 million grant served to formalize what prior to the grant was an informal process. The addition of these members did not pose serious problems for the Consortium, but it meant that more time was required to be sure all members were well

educated on School-To-Work principles and the type of system being built. School-To-Work, because it is a system rather than a component, is very complex and requires substantial knowledge to properly administer. However, the creation of the official Northwest Wisconsin School-To-Work Consortium did significantly alter the method by which the group interacted. The process was now much more formal, meeting minutes were kept, and formal motions were made and voted upon. Fortunately, one of the new Consortium members was very knowledgeable and the other members trusted the judgement of the three core representatives. This trust would keep the Consortium smoothly running so long as the three representatives were in agreement. However, the nature of the relationships among these three members prior to the implementation of the Consortium was one of learning, teaching, brainstorming, sharing ideas and questioning and/or challenging each other's thinking.

This type of "free flow" of ideas was greatly stifled under the new organizational structure since creative brainstorming sessions could be viewed by others as disagreements. Furthermore, administering a grant required a different process than developing a grant. Consensus became more valuable under the new Consortium than in the planning stages. However, the relationships were formed by and in large part based upon the planning process. In addition, a professional staff person (the School-To-Work Operations Specialist) was hired to serve as staff to the Consortium and assist with implementation and maintenance of the School-To-Work system and seeking additional funds. While this position relieved many of the pressures on individual group members, it also altered the nature of the relationships as Consortium members were now

communicating with the Operations Specialist rather than each other as they did prior to having staff. The three core members needed to find a different way of interacting than that to which they were accustomed.

Another outcome of hiring a professional staff person to the Consortium was that it essentially removed the core member from the NWCEP/NWPIC from the implementation process. The School-To-Work Operations Specialist was hired by the NWCEP and part of the job duties were to implement NWCEP's work-based activities. The other core Consortium partners were mid-level administrators within their respective organizations. The professional staff hired by their respective agencies as part of the School-To-Work effort reported directly to these core members. This was not the case with the NWCEP/NWPIC representative who was the Executive Director and did not directly supervise the School-To-Work Business Liaisons. The addition of professional staff to the Consortium added another dimension to interagency communications and required that this new staff person quickly become as proficient and knowledgeable on School-To-Work issues as the core members. For this reason, a teacher was recruited to fill the position. It was felt that an educator could more quickly learn the school-based learning activities and would learn the work-based activities by being located at the NWCEP office.

The new staff person quickly saw that funding cuts posed a serious threat to the Consortium within the next year and sought new public grants to support the School-To-Work efforts. The only substantial public grant available which could be used to support School-To-Work was a new educational initiative called GOALS 2000. The Operations Specialist requested that CESA#12 write for the GOALS 2000 grant on behalf of the

Consortium to support School-To-Work efforts. Both the CESA#12 and WITC and WITC representatives felt that GOALS 2000 funds should not be used to support School-To-Work efforts. The educational representatives felt that Goals 2000 was a broader initiative than School-To-Work. These different perspectives created a rift in the Consortium and was one of the major factors which caused the Operations Specialist to seek and accept other employment after only ten months. A replacement was quickly hired. This time the Operations Specialist was hired from within the ranks of the NWCEP. The rift created over the GOALS 2000 grant marked the beginning of a major change in the relationship between Consortium members as a genuine lack of trust developed starting with this issue.

It also needs to be mentioned that the representatives form CESA#12 and WITC began to be tardy and to miss many Consortium meetings. This gave the impression that they did not view School-To-Work as critical, as did the rest of the Consortium, or that they felt the meetings were unimportant. Not supporting the use of GOALS 2000 fund for School-To-Work activities served to fuel this belief among the remaining Consortium members. All of the above had an impact upon and altered the normative and cognitive environments in which the School-To-Work Consortium operated.

Post Implementation Period - January 21, 1996, to Present

During the 1994-1995 school year, the Consortium received $797,931 to begin implementation of a School-To-Work system in the ten counties of northwest Wisconsin. This federal implementation grant assisted the subsequent State of Wisconsin funding, providing $570,00 in 1995-1996. The following year saw the Consortium receive

$148,400. During program year 1997 - 1998, the Consortium received $93,741, and projections for 1998 - 1999 are for $26,586 in School-To-Work funding. Of this, the Consortium Partnership Agreement called for the NWCEP to receive approximately $8,000, with which to sustain four Business Liaisons (who stretched their time among 23 school districts and 500 businesses) and one Operations Specialist and a clerical support person. The total cost of this staffing level was over $280,000. The difference in School-to-Work funding and the cost of the staff was being supported with JTPA Title II-C and Title II-B funds. These increasing needs for JTPA funds to support School-To-Work efforts came during a time (over the past four years) when the NWCEP/NWPIC have realized an over 30% reduction in JTPA funds. Therefore, compounding the fall in School-To-Work funding was also a drastic cut in JTPA funding. While the NWCEP sustained the most dramatic budget cuts, other Consortium partners were in a similar situation. WITC witnessed its portion of School-To-Work funding decline from over $80,000 in year one, to a token amount of $100 this current year. WITC supported its one staff person using Tech Prep and local Technical College District funds. CESA #12 received matching funds from local school districts to support the declining School-To-Work funds. However, much of these dollars are in the form of "soft" matching, not real, dollars flowing to CESA #12 and several school districts threatened to drop from the Consortium due to budget constraints caused by the state of Wisconsin's requirements to capitate local school district budgets. In addition, Carl Perkins and JTPA 8% funds used to also support CESA#12 staff were reduced. The constraints in the regulative

environment outlined above lead to the belief that the chief problem faced by the Northwest Wisconsin School-To-Work Consortium is funding.

In a review of the various program plans, grant applications, meeting minutes and other pertinent historical data from the Consortium, it becomes apparent that two of the most critical characteristics of the project were the basis of the relationships among the three core members and funding. The basis of the relationships were rooted in a desire to bring about educational reform, a high level of collaboration and success on many new educational initiatives and the identified need for funding to implement comprehensive transition plans for all students. Therefore the environment in which School-To-Work developed was energetic, hopeful, and because it was also based upon previous success, one in which all (if not all, many) things were possible. However, the core members were very cognizant of the fact that funding was a critical need which had to be met prior to full implementation of the concepts and the members were willing to jointly share resources to address these needs. There was a single focus, a comprehensive strategy and solid working relationships in place prior to receiving School-To-Work funding.

Once the funding was received, the focus changed to implementation of the School-To-Work plan. During the first six to eight months, the Consortium's time was spent hiring and training staff, developing outcome goals, providing technical assistance to field level staff and tracking progress. Once implementation of the School-To-Work system was somewhat secure, the attention of the Consortium turned to long-term funding. This change in focus was fueled by the fact that the NWCEP and NWPIC had received a substantial reduction in their JTPA Title II-C funding which fell from $1,100,000 in PY-

1994 to $150,000 in PY 1995. Prior to this cut, it was planned that the JTPA Title II-C funds were to be used to support the work-based portion of the School-To-Work system. Therefore when future funding constraints became apparent, the lack of funds became the focus of our Consortium meetings rather than the previous focus which was on School-To-Work system development and improvement.

How the Consortium could stretch remaining dollars and fund staff into the next fiscal year drove most of the discussions at School-To-Work Consortium meetings during the remainder of the project. The only public grant of substantial size available which could be used to support School-To-Work was a new educational initiative called GOALS 2000. This was an educational grant focused upon school improvement and only an educational agency could apply for the funds. However, a consortium similar in nature to the School-To-Work Consortium was required for the purposes of the grant.

The Operations Specialist had discussions with the national and federal School-To-Work offices and was encouraged by these offices to use GOALS 2000 funds to support the School-To-Work efforts. Therefore, the NWCEP and NWPIC requested that CESA#12 write for the GOALS 2000 grant on behalf of the Consortium to support School-To-Work efforts. Both the CESA#12 and the WITC representatives felt that GOALS 2000 funds should not be used to support School-To-Work efforts. The educational representatives felt that Goals 2000 was a broader initiative than School-To-Work.

Goals 2000 may have caused the Consortium to change its focus somewhat. The nature of grants these days is that the vast majority of new funding is only available for

new initiatives. There is virtually no funding for sustaining projects. Every grantor seems to want grantees to experiment with creating new, different or innovative projects. Given this climate, changing the focus, or some of the emphases, of the School-To-Work system was a calculated risk that the NWCEP/NWPIC was willing to take to maintain funding levels. The education partners of the Consortium did not feel this was a risk worth taking. In addition, the education partners felt that Goals 2000 was a distinct and separate initiative from School-To-Work. The education partners strongly felt that the School-To-Work initiative had become extremely work intensive and all consuming of their time and they did not feel that they could support another new initiative. Consequently, CESA#12 refused to write for the GOALS 2000 grant on behalf of the Northwest Wisconsin School-To-Work Consortium. The disagreement over the GOALS 2000 grant marked the beginning of a major change the relationship between Consortium members. Although the NWCEP/NWPIC Consortium members were disappointed at the education partner's views that GOALS 2000 was a separate initiative, they certainly agreed that implementing School-To-Work was very time consuming and a new initiative could make this work become overburdensome.

It was later explained to the Consortium that CESA #12 had indeed written a proposal for GOALS 2000 funding and that while some funds might be used for School-To-Work efforts, it would be at the district level and only for school-based activities. This proposal was provided to the Consortium after it was developed and neither the NWCEP nor NWPIC were involved in the proposal development process. Furthermore, the NWCEP and NWPIC were mentioned in the proposal as participating agencies without their

knowledge. The grant however, was developed with the WITC representative of the Consortium. It was assumed at the earlier Consortium meeting that CESA#12 would not be writing a GOALS 2000 proposal. The knowledge that a proposal, in fact, had been written and without input from the Consortium partners was viewed as somewhat of a betrayal of the previous relationships of the partners who collaborated on all new educational reform initiatives. Furthermore, in light of the future budget cuts and potential ramifications that such cuts could have on the work-based portion of the School-To-Work plan, this move was viewed as an abandonment of the importance previously placed on work-based activities. It was felt that two of the partners were "making a grab for the money" without the benefit of informing the other partners. It was felt by the NWCEP representative that the original tenets upon which the Consortium were based, namely trust, sharing of resources and a genuine effort towards collaborative education reform, had been surrendered. More distrust developed among members of the NWCEP/NWPIC. This lack of trust was fueled by the resignation of the School-To-Work Operations Specialist who cited the potential loss of funding due to lack of support of the GOALS 2000 grant as a major reason for his resignation.

Many heated debates among the Consortium members ensued. NWCEP/NWPIC felt that GOALS 2000 funds should be used to support the School-To-Work system. Fracture lines developed and the Consortium began to grow into two camps, work-based and school-based. Another issue which helped to fractionalize the Consortium were persistent requests by the CESA#12 representative for additional JTPA and School-To-Work funding to support not only work-based activities, but also to support school-based

activities. CESA#12 made requests at each Consortium meeting for the NWCEP/NWPIC to offset cuts in School-To-Work funds with Job Training Partnership Act funds. These JTPA funds are the baseline funding received by NWCEP/NWPIC. These funds are used to deliver employment and training services to economically disadvantaged persons across northwest Wisconsin. The funds are used to hire NWCEP staff and provide funding for training and supportive services to JTPA participants in training. In essence, CESA#12 was requesting that JTPA program funds be rerouted to support CESA#12 and local school district staff delivering School-To-Work services. At this same time, the NWCEP had laid-off regular JTPA staff due to budget cuts in base-line JTPA programs.

These persistent requests for increased funding by CESA#12 was viewed by NWCEP/NWPIC representatives and the new School-To-Work Operations Specialist as a raid on NWCEP/NWPIC's funding. It was felt that CESA#12 was expecting NWCEP to lay-off its regular JTPA and School-To-Work staff in order to support CESA#12's School-To-Work staff. In addition, CESA#12 continually requested that the percentage of School-To-Work funds distributed between NWCEP and CESA #12 be changed thereby giving CESA#12 more of the School-To-Work funds. This also meant the NWCEP/NWPIC would have to replace these lost School-To-Work funds with scarce JTPA funds. It is important to remember the NWCEP/NWPIC had lost millions of dollars in JTPA funding during this same period and had to lay-off regular JTPA staff to meet the budget cuts. However, the NWCEP/NWPIC maintained its School-To-Work staff by making up lost School-To-Work funds with JTPA funds. CESA#12's insistence on having larger amounts of JTPA funds and a larger percentage of School-To-Work funds to

support CESA#12 and local school district staff again called into question the original goals established by the Consortium. At the time of developing the School-To-Work proposal, all the partners agreed it was equally valuable to have staff specializing in both school-based and work based activities. The CESA#12 would be responsible for hiring staff to deliver the School-based activities while the NWCEP hired staff to deliver the work-based activities. Now CESA#12, through requesting changes in the School-To-Work funding allocation and additional JTPA funds, was intimating that the school-based activities were more valuable that the work-based activities. This shift in philosophy by CESA#12 was viewed as disingenuous because it only became apparent when funding was tight. This also made NWCEP distrustful of CESA#12.

It is important to state that during this period CESA #12 and WITC also were to become distrustful of NWCEP/NWPIC. Consortium meetings now often entailed heated debates over funding issues. Debates over the merit of school-based activities versus work-based activities, the number of staff needed, concerns over paying unemployment compensation and how to fund staff into the next year became the topic of discussion at each Consortium meeting. The foundations upon which the relationships between the three core members were no longer actively being engaged. Little planning outside of funding issues was taking place. There was no longer a trusting, learning, or free flow of ideas type of environment. While a high level of collaboration was taking place with existing funds, no new collaborative were being discussed with regard to new funds. Within this environment, disagreements and subsequent lack of trust which developed over the GOALS 2000 grant, the NWCEP/NWPIC believed that it could no longer rely

upon its partners for assistance with funding issues and that they were, in fact, "on their own" so to speak with regard to funding. Consequently, some budget reductions in JTPA were off-set by the NWCEP/NWPIC eliminating grants to CESA#12 to support school-based activities in both year-round and summer school. These budget cuts were not retaliatory in nature. However, the loss of support in funding for work-based activities needed JTPA funding to in order to continue the services. Both Boards felt that it was their role to support the work-based activities. However, it is an interesting paradox that the debates over funding of school-based versus work-based activities served to galvanize both Boards' support for continued work-based activities. The elimination of grants to CESA#12 for school-based activities was viewed as a retaliation for the lack of support for GOALS 2000 and abandonment of the NWCEP and NWPIC's support for school-based activities. The relationships which started as collaborative had become competitive.

The other impact this has had upon the Consortium is that fewer and fewer meetings have taken place. During the formative stages, the Consortium met every other week for nearly two months. After that, the Consortium met at least monthly. After one year, many Consortium meetings have become poorly attended and meetings have dropped off the current level of meeting quarterly.

Since January 21, 1996, local match funds have substantially increased and Consortium members have used larger amounts of their targeted federal funds as match. Simultaneously, JTPA, Carl Perkins and Tech Prep allocations to this area have been substantially reduced. This means a much larger percentage of these targeted federal dollars are supporting a non-targeted School-To-Work system. Meanwhile, federal and

state School-To-Work funds have been dramatically reduced and local school districts have had capitations placed on their budgets. Although this shifting of financial burden from federal School-To-Work funds to local funds was anticipated, it was not expected that capitations would be placed on local school districts nor that dramatic cuts in JTPA and smaller cuts in Tech Prep and Carl Perkins funding would occur. This tremendous constraint on funds for School-To-Work efforts has had a substantial impact upon the Northwest Wisconsin School-To-Work Consortium.

Funding cuts have curtailed services at the NWCEP by having the School-To-Work Business Liaisons and administrative staff performing both School-To-Work and JTPA activities. In effect, a cutting of work-based activities available to students has occurred. School districts have not been able to provide the full amount of local match dollars promised due to capitations and several districts have threatened to leave the Consortium due to having to choose whether to fund School-To-Work or pay for other activities which may be more politically popular at the local school district.

Other issues that effected the evolution of the Consortium were that the WITC representative who was also the Tech Prep Coordinator took a position with CESA#12. This representative was replaced; however, the new representative has a different focus and different goals for Tech Prep and it remains to be seen what impact this new representative will have on the Consortium.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter I will provide a brief overview of some of the successes of the Consortium. I will then discuss what conditions were necessary to establish and maintain the inter-organizational relationships critical to the Consortium. I will then describe what Consortium partners thought would be the long-term organizational structure of the Consortium. I will then discuss what other salient issues were learned from performing this research and finally, I will discuss what further research should be performed.

Over the course of the past four years, the Consortium has had many successes and failures and while this paper focuses upon the relationships at the administrative/board level, I think it is important to briefly mention the tremendous success the Consortium has had at the student level. With regard to school-based learning and connecting activities: One school district of the original 24 Consortium members has left the consortium primarily due to geographical/boundary issues. The 23 remaining school districts range from very small (with graduating classes of 20 students) to large multi-campus districts. All schools have staff assigned, either full or part-time, to School-To-Work endeavors. Much of the work with staff comes via the CESA#12 School-To-Work Coordinators, who have offices in the schools. During the last year, 48 % of 11th graders had written

career plans, 33% had declared a formal career major, and 43% of students in grades 9-12 were enrolled in integrated and applied academic and occupational courses. All participating school districts have adopted a portfolio process and many have gone to block scheduling of students. Over one thousand students have performed a formal job shadow. Much work was also done in updating career counseling, assessment and guidance services. Many teachers received staff development training, and advances continue in pertinent areas such as articulation with post-secondary educational institutions. With its large network of employers already providing worked-based training via JTPA, the NWPIC and NWCEP was quickly able to identify and recruit promising and appropriate businesses for School-To-Work purposes. Four School-To-Work Business Liaisons immediately collected information regarding area employers and the School-To-Work activities they would be interested in sponsoring. They then set about coordinating with interested parties in the schools in order to speed referrals of students, assist school personnel with School-To-Work related projects, disseminate pertinent information, provide feedback on work-based learning experiences, and present options for School-To-Work activities. In keeping with the Consortium strategy of assisting schools rather than dictating mandates, these Business Liaisons work with differing emphases among the districts. In some areas, very comprehensive job shadowing occurs. In some, the accent is on paid work experience, while in others the Liaisons help with service learning programs. They may, depending on the school's need and time-line for implementation, serve on committees addressing curriculum or staff development issues, bringing a private sector perspective and flavor to the proceedings. By being flexible and recognizing that

each school may decide to emphasize different issues each year of the program, local ownership is gained that reflects that particular community's labor market, while maintaining an impetus which should culminate in each school possessing a full menu of School-To-Work options, both for staff and students. To date, over 500 employers have agreed to provide varying work-based learning activities.

What Conditions Were Necessary to Create the Consortium?

The salient conditions necessary to create this Consortium were (a) solid relationships built on a deeper level than professional acquaintance, (b) available funding, and (c) an open process of communication.

When reviewing the applicable literature, it becomes apparent that several items are necessary for the establishment and maintenance of interorganizational relationships. These are that each participating agency has a perceived benefit from participating, a shared vision and goals exists between all participating organizations, funding and resources are perceived as adequate and fairly distributed, and each participating organization has incorporated the goals of the interorganizational coalition into its own goals. I will now discuss each of these items as it relates to the Northwest Wisconsin School-To-Work Consortium.

The relationships were built on trust, both personal and professional. The three core Consortium members had years of successful program planning and implementation work to their credit. Each member was highly respected in his/her own area of expertise. These three members were also social friends and had a relationship that transcended the work environment. There was ample funding to provide the Consortium with the staff needed

to facilitate the implementation of the School-To-Work system. Up until the creation of the official Consortium, there did exist an open forum by which to provide honest and unencumbered communication.

When I analyzed the environment of the Consortium, especially as a participant observer, I have looked closely at the inter-organizational community approach when performing this case study. This approach emphasizes not the individual organization units or even their characteristics as an aggregate, but rather the network of relations among them.(32) The inter-organizational community approach provides the best context by which to view the Northwest Wisconsin School-to-Work model. I believe that the inter-organizational community context is very similar to this School-to-Work system in that this type of view gives attention to horizontal relationships among organizations which lack formal rights over one another. This is true of School-to-Work model. School-to-Work is a complex open ended system which is a conglomeration of variety of systems. When analyzing how these systems are held together and studying the nature of the systems, it becomes abundantly clear that three things, trust, funding and an open process of communication seem to be essential ingredients for this Consortium. Very much like a three legged stool, if any one of these three items are lacking, the coalition will falter.

The implementation of the federal School-To-Work grant changed the cognitive and normative environment in which these three individuals had been successfully working. The broadening of the School-To-Work Consortium to include four additional members, the keeping of meeting minutes, following Roberts Rules Of Order and the hiring of

professional staff significantly changed the method of interaction of the three core members. In addition, the process changed from one of planning to implementation and maintenance which requires different skills and processes. The creation of the official Northwest Wisconsin School-To-Work Consortium fundamentally changed the communication structures as the Consortium replaced the previous unencumbered, free flowing dialog which now followed the prescribed distribution of authority and task responsibility defined by the expanded Consortium. It also changed the nature of the communication in that it now followed linear and horizontal lines rather than the previously unstructured and decentralized nature of our communications.

Another issue which had an impact upon the implementation of the Consortium was that of structure. I have already discussed how changes at the administrative Consortium level hampered communication, but there are other levels of structure which need to be analyzed. The problem with the structure of the School-To-Work model was that it used existing structures to develop the Picket Fence model, specifically, the staffing patterns which existed within the three participating agencies. The School-To-Work model utilized existing structures which provided quick implementation of the system; however, in retrospect it may have been more advantageous to build a structure specifically for the system. "We should place top priority on developing the really important program procedures, and only later design the organizational structures to support those programs."(13) The Consortium used existing structures and then when funds ran out Consortium partners were left to defend their individual existing internal structures.

Resource acquisition is also a critical element for the Northwest Wisconsin School-To-Work Consortium. This Consortium has been most greatly shaped and influenced by its regulative environment in terms of funding inputs. While having solid relationships was critical to the implementation of the Consortium, School-To-Work in Northwest Wisconsin would be little more that a good plan sitting on a shelf had the Consortium not received federal funding. In fact, going after federal School-To-Work local implementation funds was a goal of the core group and provided a focal point for members to rally around. The availability of funds is a critical ingredient in the development of the Consortium.

What Conditions Were Necessary to Maintain the Consortium?

When examining the changes that have taken place in the normative and cognitive environments of the Consortium, these changes must be placed in context of the regulative environment as it is funding which has had the most profound impact upon the Northwest Wisconsin School-To-Work Consortium. When one looks at the historical development of the Northwest Wisconsin School-To-Work Consortium as defined as an open systems model, it can be seen that there have been very few changes in the basic organizational information such as outputs, purposes, inputs, environment, technology, structure, behavior and process, culture and system dynamics. The only system that changed throughout this process was the formalization and expansion of Consortium membership. While this was certainly a contributing factor to diminution of the Consortium's earlier momentum, this loss was triggered by lack of funds. Also, it needs to be remembered that the expansion and formalization of the Consortium was due to receiving funds as this was

a regulative requirement of the School-To-Work grant. Changes in the Consortium were changes made by the introduction of money and then having those funds pulled away. The external environment effected the internal system. It can be seen that the Consortium has reacted to the outside influences of the regulative environment. These reactions, however, have been played-out in the Consortium's cognitive and normative environments.

Table 1: Federal and State Funding Allocations

Program Year	Federal Funds Received	State Funds Recieved	Total Funds Recieved
10-1-94 to 1-20-96	$797,931	$0	$797,931
10-1-96 to 9-30-96	$342,000	$228,000	$570,000
10-1-96 to 9-30-97	$0	$148,400	$148,400
10-1-97 to 9-30-98	$0	$93,741	$93,741
10-1-98 to 9-30-99	$0	$26,586	$26,586
10-1-99 to 9-30-00	$0	$0	$0
10-1-00 to 9-30-01	$0	$0	$0

*Program years six and seven are projections (34).

Although it appears the consortium recieved a substantial funding cut from year one to year two, this is somewhat deceiving as year one consisted of nearly sixteen months and year two funding began with four months left to expend year one grant funds. Therefore, the Northwest Wisconsin School-To-Work Consortium received stable funding between the first two years of operations. However, from year one to year four the Consortium realized a nearly 85% decrease in combined Federal and State funding. This funding reduction has been off-set with local funds and slight reductions in services. These additional local funds were generated through JTPA, Carl Perkins, Tech Prep and local

school district funds. During this same time period, funding capitations have been placed on local school districts throughout Wisconsin, the local JTPA administrative entity received a 30% budget reduction, Carl Perkins received a 7% cut and Tech Prep funding was also slightly reduced. These capitations and budget cuts have made it difficult to off-set the reductions in School-To-Work funds as envisioned by the framers of the federal School-To-Work Opportunities Act.

It has been difficult for the Consortium partners to maintain their once energetic passion for school reform, while attempting to meet payrolls with dramatically declining resources. It is also important to note that the Northwest Wisconsin School-To-Work Consortium is fortunate in that it received and additional year of funding due to the winning of a federal School-To-Work local implementation grant. Other Consortiums/School-To-Work projects will not receive this additional year of funding.

When the nature of the relationships changed due to Consortium composition, it strained coordination efforts but not nearly to the level that became apparent once the trust was eroded. Once the personal and professional relationships among the core three members became weakened, the interagency relationships also diminished. However, it is critical to state that the tensions created within the Consortium would not have been manifested in a climate of easy access to money. The GOALS 2000 grant was the only large public grant available which could have sustained School-To-Work efforts at the time. Had other funding streams been available for the Consortium to access, or if the partner's base-line funding were to have increased, there would have been no cause for looking internally for additional dollars and the subsequent suspicious feelings which

developed. The federal framers of the national School-To-Work Act anticipated that local partners would supply the funding after the federal School-To-Work funds had run out. This expectation did not account for cuts and capitations in funding streams that local partners were planning to use to fill the gap left by the loss of School-To Work funds. When developing the School-To-Work Act, the federal government did not anticipate huge cuts nor capitations in JTPA, Carl Perkins, Tech Prep and local school district funds. The federal government did not anticipate shifts in federal and state employment and training initiatives such as Welfare Reform and creating Job Centers which had the result of diverting funds from School-To-Work initiatives. These unanticipated budget cuts, capitations and shifts in program emphasis have prevented the Consortium from fully replacing the lost federal School-To-Work dollars and consequently, the full implementation of the School-To-Work system.

Given these restrictive funding environmental conditions, the Northwest Wisconsin School-To-Work Consortium developed a strategy of looking internally rather than continuing its historical external focus for funding. This new focus caused the members to attempt to protect what was perceived as "their" base-line funding rather than focus on how to bring new monies into the Consortium. Consequently, each Consortium partner has felt that its technical core is constantly under threat. In effect, the Consortium members turned on each other for more funds rather than looking externally. This restrictive external environment affected the internal environment of the Consortium.

The mistrust which developed over the lack of support for the GOALS 2000 grant and the subsequent writing of that grant without input from the Consortium marked the

beginning of decline in the momentum. Since the implementation of the School-To-Work grant, neither the Consortium nor the initial core group have been successful in developing and receiving a collaborative educational reform grant. Coordination was fractured at the administrative level due to funding squabbles. The group was externally focused in the beginning with regard to funding, but cuts and lack of external resources forced the group to look internally. Rather than jointly looking to the state or federal government or to private foundations for funding, the Consortium began to look at each other to recoup lost dollars from existing funding streams.

This change to an internal focus for funds rather than the previous external focus further divided the group. It became painfully obvious to all Consortium partners that each agency's main focus has been upon saving its staff, rather than the more noble and singular focus of educational reform as when it began. The partners no longer felt they could rely upon each other for help. Instead, the partners felt that the other agencies were making a bid for each other's base-line funds. It is interesting to note when the partners no longer felt they could rely upon each other for help in funding, the hopefulness which was so pervasive prior to receiving School-To-Work funding began to disappear. One of the interesting ironies of this Consortium is that it was created because each of the partner agencies were starved for cash. Funds were the missing ingredient in order for the participating agencies to fully implement the School-To-Work system or Picket Fence model. Now however, each agency is also starved for cash and lack of funds has been identified as the chief ingredient lacking to maintain the School-To-Work system. Yet, the former worked to develop the Consortium and the latter has weakened the Consortium.

The Consortium needs to reestablish its success at resource acquisition if it is to be sustained. Additional funding during the past three years would have given the consortium a badly needed "shot in the arm" financially by stabilizing the funding cuts, placing the focus for new funds on the external, rather than the internal environment, and it would have improved the morale of the technical core. During the past three years, the Consortium's technical core has been under constant threat due to funding cuts. The persistent erosion of School-To-Work and match dollars from the system has had the effect of a sword of Damocles which threatens all Consortium members and allows them to focus on little else but this immediate threat. It has stifled creativity and prevented the technical core from functioning to its full potential. This is an important issue and one which should not be undervalued.

One of the interesting points I analyzed in the development of the Consortium was that the core group's technical core was under no threat when developing plans for the School-To-Work system. Each of the three partners was developing plans for a then non-existent system. They had nothing to lose if the Consortium was not funded. I did not include protection of the technical core as an item in the previous sub-chapter as I wanted to reduce the items to three necessary conditions and I am not sure that protection of the technical core is a requirement. However, I am sure that the Consortium has not been able to recapture its once vibrant planning abilities during this period of dramatic budget reductions.

A common mission and goals were critical to the implementation of the Consortium. When one looks across the literature on inter-organizational relationships, it becomes clear

that common goals bind Consortium members together and that without a common goals, there cannot be a coordinated system. This statement is certainly true of the Northwest Wisconsin School-To-Work Consortium. During the inception there was a shared common vision and goals, but this became altered in light of budget restraints. The role of individual Consortium partners evolved from one of change agent to one of administrative agent for their individual organizations. They became stewards of their agency's School-To-Work resources rather than change agents. This is because none of the partners organization's fully adopted the goals and mission of the School-To-Work Consortium and adopted these goals as part of their own. School-To-Work principles have not become central to the mission of the participating agencies. When one analyzes the items necessary to maintain inter-organizational relationships, the inability of the participating organizations to adopt Consortium's mission and goals into their own stands out as a critical deficiency and has made this Consortium's inter-organizational relationships inherently fragile.

It is safe to say that, currently, a commitment to the goals of the School-To-Work system and funding are the primary ties which bind the partners in the Northwest Wisconsin School-To-Work Consortium. The three critical items identified as necessary to creation of the Consortium, trust, funding and an open communication process, have been substantially curtailed. Bickering over funding related issues had eroded much of the trust which existed previously, the formal Consortium communication lines do not allow for open/spontaneous communication and funding has been slashed.

What Was The Expected End Result?

The board of the Consortium was designed to meet federal requirements, not for effectiveness. The field staff was organized for quick and effective implementation of the picket fence model, not for long-tern funding loss or building a sustainable system which would be in place after the loss of funding. The Consortium should have considered looking at establishing a more temporary structure, one that was designed for a specific period of time or until the accomplishment of some goal(s) rather than the more permanent structure which was utilized. However, it could not foresee the loss in funding nor the temporary nature of School-To-Work funding. Consequently, the notion of creating a different structure was never discussed. This is, indeed, one of many ironies which become apparent when looking back on the development of the Consortium.

The education community is very accustomed to innovation cycles. What is problematic is the cycle of creation and death that is imbedded in many of these educational reform initiatives. The Consortium partners fully believed, and still do, that School-To-Work will not follow this traditional cyclical nature of school reform. Consequently, the Consortium partners did not entertain the notion of creating different structures or developing a more stable relationship than one based on a consortial arrangement. The Consortium partners did not consider "spinning the Consortium off" as its own entity. It was assumed that the Consortium would be an on-going arrangement with both inside and outside resources. However, due to the changes in funding, structure and ultimately the relationships of the organizational players, it is becoming apparent that the Consortium may be project orientated. The Consortium will probably end when the

project is completed or funding ends. When we examine declining organizations, the administrative theory forwarded by Charles H. Levine in Managing Fiscal Stress: The Crisis in the Public Sector, outlines a variety of situations which mirror or is currently happening with the Consortium. In particular, environmental entropy, political vulnerability, and organization atrophy are components of organization decline which are currently affecting Northwest Wisconsin School-to-Work Consortium. While it is certainly true that the Northwest Wisconsin School-to-Work Consortium has been affected by massive budget cuts, it is not yet determined whether or not this is an organization in decline, or whether it is an organization experiencing change.

Given this current state of the Consortium, however, I do believe there are several conditions which could reinvigorate the group. First, I am recommending to the Northwest Wisconsin School-To-Work Consortium that it engage in a strategic planning process to develop a five year plan for the activities of the Consortium, including funding. One of the critical questions for the Consortium is in the face of the loss of the financial incentives, what factors or incentives would keep Consortium partners coming to the table? I believe that planning around funding and educational reform issues holds the answer for the Consortium. Strategic planning as it relates to funding, however, must be externally focused rather than directed at the small amount of existing funds. I believe it is important to establish a planning committee consisting of the three original core members. I believe it is also important to work at re-establishing the open communication in an unstructured setting that existed prior to the formal seating of the larger Consortium. An attempt should be made to reinvigorate the earlier smaller core group around educational

reform issues again. The Northwest Wisconsin School-to-Work Consortium needs to engage in a process of redefining its mission and goals. The partners still have a strong commitment to the goals of the School-To-Work system. I recommend the Consortium build from this common goal. Furthermore, the other partners and I share the belief that School-To-Work is not a "flash in the pan" program but rather a systemic educational reform effort with long-term implications. Although long and short-term funding for School-To-Work currently looks bleak, the partners truly believe that School-To-Work will have a resurgence as the labor market tightens up and employers continue to call on government for a better prepared labor force. Because the partners believe there will be a re-emphasis on School-To-Work programming and subsequent funding, there is a solid incentive to reinvigorate the relationships within the Consortium.

The above would provide a set of common goals by which the Consortium can build for the future. A strategic planning process could also provide Consortium members with a rebirth of their role as change agent rather than their current role as administrative agent for their individual organization. Throughout the Consortium's history, it becomes clear that the role of members changed from one of community change agent to that of stewards of School-To-Work resources for their individual agency.

What Else Was Learned From This Experience?

When implemented properly, School-To-Work has the potential to bring about real systemic change in the way America prepares its students for the world of work. It provides a transition model which can ensure all students have access to work-based educational opportunities which are linked with what they learn in the classroom. It

provides a new way of thinking and making schooling more relevant while better preparing students for post secondary education and the world of work. It has the potential to address the needs of the nation as it relates to increasing the job readiness skills of the new workforce, increase the breadth of what students learn in the classroom, and make students aware of the vast diversity of educational and vocational opportunities open to them.

When developing the proposal for this case study, I felt the importance of the relationships was a minor issue. Since conducting the research, and particularly when interviewing the other Consortium partners, I became fully aware of what a critical component good working relationships are to the success of this project. I also found it interesting that one partner felt the relationships was the most important factor affecting the Consortium. I have also learned the importance of one's own organizational goals especially as it relates to survival and the impact survival has on consortia relationships and planning.

What Further Research Should Be Done?

While analyzing the historical development of the Northwest Wisconsin School-To-Work Consortium there have been several critical questions relating to the development of other School-To-Work Consortiums that I have been unable to research. Specifically, I would like to research how other Consortiums have addressed the issue of developing a systems model rather than "adding-on" several School-To-Work components. I would like to know how other Consortiums developed consensus or came to agreement on their definition of School-To-Work. I would like to research urban and rural School-To-Work

Consortiums in an attempt to find patterns or differences. Most importantly, I would like to research how other Consortiums have dealt with funding constraints and particularly how they will replace lost School-To-Work funds. I would like to research other Consortiums both at the programmatic and field levels to see if their successes and difficulties mirrored that of the Consortium. What have been the effects of funding cuts upon other School-To-Work Consortia? Such research would be important because it would significantly add to the growing body of knowledge concerning School-To-Work programming and fill a huge gap in the current literature.

As stated earlier, there are many gaps in the current literature on School-To-Work transition, particularly as it relates to relationships at the administrative level. Critical educational programs with huge budgetary implications such as Carl Perkins, Job Training Partnership Act, Goals 2000, Tech Prep, and of course School-To-Work, now contain language requiring each of these funding streams to have a School-To-Work linkage. School-To-Work may live a long life because many large educational grants are required to be coordinated with School-To-Work initiatives. Unfortunately, some educators are scrambling to put together School-To-Work programs which only meets the letter of the law. Few School-To-Work projects are comprehensive enough to be called systems and include participating representation outside of the educational field. The Northwest Wisconsin School-To-Work Consortium is in the vanguard in the area of developing meaningful partnerships.

In the long run, however, as more federal and state programs are added to the above list requiring School-To-Work linkages, the education community will need to build

meaningful relationships with the workforce development community, post-secondary education, parents and other stakeholders. With this in mind, research into the nature of the relationships, not only of the Northwest Wisconsin School-To-Work Consortium partners but of all Consortiums, at the time of inception and how have those relationships have changed over time becomes very important. Looking at how the project has evolved and identifying the factors having impacted on the Consortium becomes critical so that others can learn from these successes and failures. I hope that similar research can also help to predict the future of the Northwest Wisconsin School-To-Work Consortium and possibly other School-To-Work Consortia in similar financial situations.

On a macro level, the chief problem faced by the Northwest Wisconsin School-To-Work Consortium is funding. As one of our education partners has recently said, " The future of School-To-Work depends, in part, on how long the support lasts from all interested parties until priorities shift to the next innovation. Until School-To-Work is fully entrenched into the education system, the future is based upon a continued commitment of funding because that is what helps to drive change in schools." it is important to note her use of the phrase "...the next innovation". This succinctly captures an attitude prevalent among educators who have become used to a series of initiatives which "tinker" with school reform. Is School-To-Work a fad? The funding plan would seem to indicate so. Profound, systemic school reform will never be achieved in five years. It will take thorough retraining of teachers, administrators and businesses. It will be fed by massive rewriting of curriculum. It will require a shift in Zeitgeist among partners and the business community. It will cost money. The issues of needing more

funding and time have not been lost at the local or national level. J.D. Hoye, Director of the national School-To-Work office was quoted as saying "One of the biggest challenges is the will to stay the course. This will take 10, 20 years. This country has not historically been willing to stay the course...I think the leadership is committed. What I'm worried about, is our communities will not stay with it".(35) The need for long-term funding support for the School-To-Work initiative is critical if we are to address bringing about systemic change.

The federal framers of the national School-To-Work Act anticipated the local partners would supply the funding after the federal School-To-Work funds had run out. This expectation did not account for cuts and capitations in funding streams that local partners were planning to use to fill the gap left by the loss of School-To Work funds. When developing the School-To-Work Act, the federal government did not anticipate huge cuts nor capitations in JTPA, Carl Perkins, Tech Prep and local school district funds. The federal government did not anticipate shifts in federal and state employment and training initiatives such as Welfare Reform and creating Job Centers which had the result of diverting funds from School-To-Work initiatives. Therefore I believe that it is time for the federal government to re-evaluate its initial thinking on the long-term funding of School-To-Work. If the federal framers of the Act are still committed to School-To-Work principles, then their initial intent of using federal funds as venture capital also needs to be re-evaluated. Should funding not be extended for the difficult task of effecting real, systemic education reform, the School-To-Work initiative will have been a terrible waste of money and effort. However, the burden for funding School-to-Work ought not just be

the responsibility of the federal government. School-To-Work is equally a state and local issue which demands equal funding participation at these levels also. The federal framers of the School-To-Work Act, by providing "venture capital" to states and local school districts, clearly intended to develop School-To-Work into a collaborative system with full participation from the federal, state and local levels. It seems however that support, measured in terms of dollars, from the state and local school districts in Wisconsin has not been forthcoming. If the state and local school districts do not incorporate the mission and goals of the federal School-To-Work Act into their own central missions, then the nature of the inter-organizational relationship between them will be inherently fragile. Consequently, there is every reason to believe that the experiences of the Northwest Wisconsin School-To-Work Consortium will be repeated with the coalition that exists between the federal, state and local school districts with School-To-Work systems.

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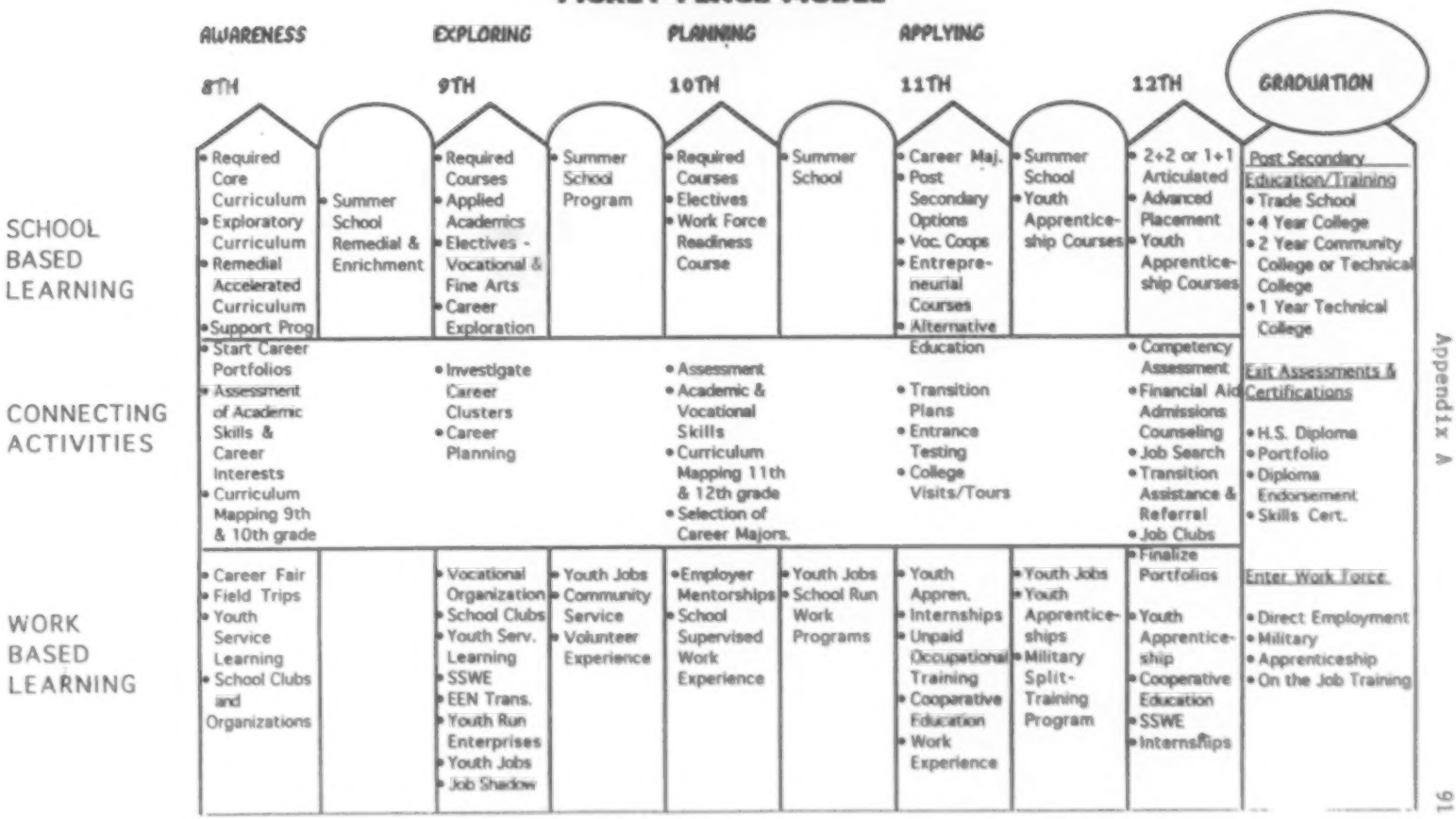
Appendix A

Picket Fence Model

Glossary of Terms for the Picket Fence Model

NORTHWEST WISCONSIN
SCHOOL TO WORK SYSTEM
PICKET FENCE MODEL


AWARENESS
EXPLORING
PLANNING
APPLYING
8TH
9TH
10TH
11TH
12TH
GRADUATION
SCHOOL BASED LEARNING
CONNECTING ACTIVITIES
WORK BASED LEARNING
• Required Core Curriculum • Exploratory Curriculum • Remedial Accelerated Curriculum • Support Prog
• Summer School Remedial & Enrichment
• Required Courses • Applied Academics • Electives - Vocational & Fine Arts • Career Exploration
• Summer School Program
• Required Courses • Electives • Work Force Readiness Course
• Summer School
• Career Maj. • Post Secondary Options • Voc. Coops • Entrepreneurial Courses • Alternative Education
• Summer School • Youth Apprenticeship Courses
• 2+2 or 1+1 Articulated • Advanced Placement • Youth Apprenticeship Courses
Post Secondary Education/Training
• Trade School
• 4 Year College
• 2 Year Community College or Technical College
• 1 Year Technical College
• Start Career Portfolios • Assessment of Academic Skills & Career Interests • Curriculum Mapping 9th & 10th grade
• Investigate Career Clusters • Career Planning
• Assessment • Academic & Vocational Skills • Curriculum Mapping 11th & 12th grade • Selection of Career Majors.
• Transition Plans • Entrance Testing • College Visits/Tours
• Competency Assessment • Financial Aid Admissions Counseling • Job Search • Transition Assistance & Referral • Job Clubs
Exit Assessments & Certifications
• H.S. Diploma
• Portfolio
• Diploma Endorsement
• Skills Cert.
• Career Fair • Field Trips • Youth Service Learning • School Clubs and Organizations
• Vocational Organization • School Clubs • Youth Serv. Learning • SSWE • EEN Trans. • Youth Run Enterprises • Youth Jobs • Job Shadow
• Youth Jobs • Community Service • Volunteer Experience
• Employer Mentorships • School Supervised Work Experience
• Youth Jobs • School Run Work Programs
• Youth Appren. • Internships • Unpaid Occupational Training • Cooperative Education • Work Experience
• Youth Jobs • Youth Apprenticeships • Military Split-Training Program
• Finalize Portfolios • Youth Apprenticeship • Cooperative Education • SSWE • Internships
Enter Work Force
• Direct Employment
• Military
• Apprenticeship
• On the Job Training

Appendix A

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Advanced Placement: Time shortened programs designed to eliminate unnecessary course redundancy. Advanced Placement is often granted when courses are waived at the postsecondary level.

Applied Academics: Presentation of subject matter in a way that integrates a particular academic discipline (such as mathematics, science, or English) with workplace applications.

Applied Learning: The ability of a student to recognize and use concepts, constants, and/or processes in authentic tasks.

Articulation: The process by which students are granted postsecondary credit for courses taken in high school. School-to-work programs can make sure that articulation agreements are secured by having community college and high school instructors work together to examine course materials, assess whether high school course contents matches that of the community college, and make adjustments as either or both levels so that curricula are "vertically-aligned." Instructors need to develop procedures for students to demonstrate that they have attained the skills and knowledge covered in specific postsecondary courses.

Authentic Assessment: To ensure that a student not only possesses knowledge, but can apply that knowledge, authentic assessment is used to measure the practical application of knowledge in "real-world" contexts. For example, a written driver's test is not a form of authentic assessment, but a road test is. Includes the use of *performance-based assessment* methods that allow students to demonstrate knowledge and skill, such as composing a poem, and *portfolio assessments* which allow students to collect their work, and in doing so, analyze and reflect on how their projects have evolved. Also involves student *exhibitions of mastery* in which students develop their presentation skills of enclosing, explaining, speaking, using visual images, and evaluating their own and others' work.

Career Cluster: Curriculums are designed to build strong foundations, provide opportunities for student choice and increase competency levels. The cluster approach is based on the concept that many occupations require common skills and knowledge. It is possible, therefore, to design curriculums that have core courses common to several specialties.

Career Major: According to the federal School-to-Work Opportunities Act, a career major is "a coherent sequence of courses or field of study that prepares a student for a first job and that: (1) integrates occupational and academic learning, integrates school-based and work-based learning, establishes linkages between secondary and postsecondary education, and prepares the student for admission to 2-year and 4-year postsecondary institutions; (2) prepares the student for employment in broad occupational clusters or industry sectors; (3) typically includes at least 2 years of secondary school and 1 or 2 years of postsecondary education; (4) provides the student, to the extent practical, with strong experience in and understanding of all aspects of the industry the student is planning to enter; (5) results in the award of a high school diploma or its equivalency, a certificate or diploma recognizing successful completion of 1 or 2 years of postsecondary education (if appropriate), and a skill certificate; and (6) may lead to further education and training, such as entry into a registered apprenticeship program, or may lead to admission to a 4-year college or university." School-to-work programs are frequently structured around broad career pathways so that students see the relevance of school learning to future earning, and begin with career awareness and exploration activities, such as job-shadowing, by the 7th grade.

Career Plan: Documentation maintained by students providing evidence that they have systematically explored their curriculum, interests, options, preferences, skills, and values and are using this knowledge of self and work as a basis for post-school goal setting and educational planning.

Cooperative Education: A program that combines vocational coursework with part-time work experience during the school year and has training agreements to outline what students are expected to learn, and what employers are expected to provide. Typically, coordination between workplace and classroom learning is not formally structured.

Curriculum: The dynamic counterpart to all of the experiences that a student encounters during the school day including instructional strategies, organizational arrangements, integrated curricular courses, and school environment. It represents curriculum a living and evolving and should be viewed within the framework of all experiences provided by the educational community.

Curriculum Map: An educational planning document designed for students use that outlines a coherent sequence of courses and experiences that lead to completion of a technical college program.

Job-shadowing: A method for accompanying students to work and careers by structuring visits to various workplaces in which they spend time with and observe the jobs of individual workers. Job-shadowing provides students a "reality check" on the world of work and the range of career opportunities available to them and helps to stimulate career exploration.

Mentoring: Support and guidance provided to youth through relationships with adults. Mentors are often adults in the community who advise and act as role models for students; many mentor student relationships are coordinated by community-based organizations. In the context of school-to-work, adult workers mentor students by helping them to become accustomed to the rules, norms, and expectations of the workplace and by serving as resources to students in resolving personal problems and work-related issues and conflicts. A mentor can also be the workplace staff person responsible for training a student and overseeing performance on the job.

Postsecondary Enrollment Options: A program in which 11th or 12th grade pupils enrolled in public schools are allowed to attend a Wisconsin institution of higher education for the purpose of taking one or more courses. Students may take courses for high school credit and/or postsecondary credit.

School-to-Work Program: As defined by the federal School-to-Work Opportunities Act, a program combining school-based learning and on-the-job instruction into a structured learning experience with the following attributes: (1) governance by broad coalitions of community partners (students, parents, high schools, employers, workers, postsecondary educational institutions, community-based organizations, and government); (2) employer provision of structured workplace learning and paid work experience; (3) school integration of academic and vocational learning; (4) combination and integration of school-based and workplace learning; (5) connections between high school and postsecondary learning for at least two years; and (6) certificates of occupational and academic skills mastery, recognized by firms across industries and nationwide.

Structured work-based learning: Employer provision of workplace learning experiences that are tied to school learning through formal training agreements, workplace learning plans, and mentoring by workplace personnel.

Tech Prep: A technical education program linking the last two years of high school with the first two years of postsecondary education and offering a coherent program of study integrating academic and vocational education. Tech Prep programs typically lead to an associate's degree, but can lead to a bachelor's degree. At present, most Tech Prep programs do not emphasize work-based learning.

Work Readiness: Characterized by students being prepared for and able to adjust to the culture and demands of the workplace. Methods for ensuring work readiness among students include: a formal orientation to the program's goals and expectations; workshops or courses on basic job-related skills; job-shadowing, or visits to different workplaces; and school-based enterprises in which students develop job skills by running real businesses.

Youth Apprenticeship: Consistent with the federal definition of school-to-work, youth apprenticeship is a model that begins in the junior year of high school and includes at least one year of postsecondary education. Organized around broad occupational clusters, youth apprenticeships provide structured work-based learning opportunities to increase students' academic and job-related competencies. Youth apprenticeship leads to a high school diploma, postsecondary credit or a degree, and certification of skills necessary to working in an industry.

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